

A
WORKING LEXICON

OR,
THREE HUNDRED WORDS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND THE HUMANITIES,
WITH THEIR ROOTS, MEANINGS, EXAMPLES, AND CAUTIONS;
TOGETHER WITH
A TABLE OF ROOT FAMILIES, NOTES UPON PRONUNCIATION,
AND A COMPLETE INDEX OF THE TERMS.

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COMPILED FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS OF SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY,
AND THE STUDIES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

P R E F A C E .

THIS LEXICON collects three hundred words that carry particular weight in social-science and humanities prose — chosen for how often they appear, and how often they are misunderstood. Each entry gives the word's roots, a working definition, a sentence showing the word at work, and, where a term is regularly misused, a caution.

Why roots? Academic English is built overwhelmingly from Greek and Latin. Learn a dozen recurring roots and unfamiliar words begin to open on inspection: once *graphein* is 'to write', then *ethnography*, *monograph*, and *demography* arrive half-translated. The table below lists the families most worth memorizing.

One further caution. Where an entry names a thinker, that fixes the word's academic anchor, not its last word. The anchors here deliberately reach beyond the European core — Ambedkar beside Weber, Oyěwùmí beside Butler, Santos beside Kuhn — but every such list still encodes a canon; read this one as an argument open to revision. The entries are starting points; the seminar is where they get contested.

A CAUTION CONCERNING ETYMOLOGY.

Etymology is a mnemonic, occasionally an argument, but never a definition: words mean what communities of use make them mean, and treating origin as essence is itself an error — the 'etymological fallacy'. Where an origin is disputed — *race*, *risk*, *bias* — the entry says so.

A TABLE OF THE PRINCIPAL ROOT FAMILIES.

ROOT.	CORE SENSE.	WORDS IT UNLOCKS.
<i>legein</i> / <i>logos</i> (Gk.)	speak, gather, account	-logy, dialectic, ideology, epistemology
<i>graphein</i> (Gk.)	write	ethnography, monograph, demography
<i>facere</i> / <i>factum</i> (L.)	make, do	fact, artefact, effect, significant, commodification
<i>ducere</i> (L.)	lead	induction, deduction, abduction, education
<i>struere</i> (L.)	build	structure, construct, deconstruct, infrastructure
<i>texere</i> (L.)	weave	text, context, textile, intertextuality
<i>gen-</i> / <i>gn-</i> / <i>jan-</i> (Gk., L., Skt.)	birth, kind	gender, genre, genealogy, nation, indigenous, jati, kin
<i>stare</i> / <i>status</i> (L.)	stand	state, status, institution, constitution
<i>currere</i> (L.)	run	discourse, curriculum, current
<i>kratos</i> (Gk.)	rule	democracy, bureaucracy, technocracy
<i>norma</i> (L.)	carpenter's square	norm, normative, normalize, enormity
<i>videre</i> (L.) / <i>idein</i> (Gk.)	see	evidence, idea, ideology
<i>plicare</i> (L.)	fold	implicate, complicate, explicate, deploy
<i>ballein</i> (Gk.)	throw	problem, symbol, hyperbole, parable

OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF CERTAIN NAMES.

Anglicized approximations for names and terms commonly mispronounced: **Weber** VAY-ber; **Geertz** GURTS; **Bourdieu** boor-DYUH; **Foucault** foo-KOH; **Gramsci** GRAHM-shee; **Saussure** soh-SUR; **Lukács** LOO-kahch; **Tönnies** TUR-nees; **Althusser** al-tuh-SAIR; **Beauvoir** boh-VWAHR; **Césaire** say-ZAIR; **Mbembe** mm-BEM-beh; **Quijano** kee-HAH-noh; **Oyěwùmí** oh-yeh-WOO-mee; **Mauss** MOHSS; **Likert** LICK-ert; **hegemony** hi-JEM-uh-nee; **anomie** AN-uh-mee; **habitus** HAB-i-tuhs; **aporia** uh-POR-ee-uh.

SECTION I.
KNOWLEDGE AND INQUIRY.

1. **EPISTEMOLOGY** [Gk *epistēmē* 'knowledge' + *logos* 'account, study'.] The study of knowledge itself — what counts as knowing, and how claims get justified. Every method carries an epistemology within it.
Ex. — “*Ethnography rests on the epistemological wager that meaning is best grasped from inside a lifeworld.*”
N.B. — *Epistemological* = concerning theories of knowledge; *epistemic* = concerning knowledge itself. An epistemic community shares knowledge, not necessarily a theory of it.
2. **ONTOLOGY** [Gk *ōn, ont-* 'being' (from *einai*, 'to be') + *logos*.] An account of what exists and what kinds of things the world contains. Asking whether 'society' is more than the individuals in it is an ontological question.
Ex. — “*Whether caste is an ancient structure or a colonial consolidation is, in part, an ontological dispute.*”
N.B. — In computing and STS, 'an ontology' also names a formal classification scheme. Context decides.
3. **PARADIGM** [Gk *paradeigma* 'pattern, example' (*para* 'beside' + *deiknynai* 'to show').] In Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), the entire framework of assumptions, exemplars, and methods within which a scientific community works.
Ex. — “*Within the behaviourist paradigm, 'meaning' was not even a researchable object.*”
N.B. — Everyday use has worn it down to 'model'. Reserve it for Kuhn-scale frameworks; 'paradigm shift' is among the most inflated phrases in academic English.
4. **THEORY** [Gk *theōria* 'contemplation, a viewing' (*theōros*, 'spectator').] A systematic account that explains or interprets patterns across cases — not a hunch, and not the opposite of fact.
Ex. — “*Durkheim's theory of ritual illuminates solidarity in settings he never saw: a temple procession, a stadium wave.*”
N.B. — 'Just a theory' misunderstands the word. In scholarship, theory is the most organized form of knowledge, not the least.
5. **IDEAL TYPE** [Max Weber's *Idealtypus* (1904); *idea* from Gk *idein*, 'to see'.] A deliberately one-sided analytical construct — pure bureaucracy, pure market — built so that messy reality can be measured against it, not so that reality can be described by it.
Ex. — “*No actual office matches the ideal type of bureaucracy; the distance between them is the finding.*”
N.B. — 'Ideal' here means idea-like, not desirable.
6. **PRAXIS** [Gk *praxis* 'doing, action' (*prassein*, 'to do').] Theory realized in transformative practice. For Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970), reflection and action upon the world in order to change it.
Ex. — “*The collective read theory on Sundays and organized on Mondays; the pairing is praxis.*”
N.B. — Not a learned synonym for 'practice'; the term claims the unity of thought and action.
7. **EMPIRICAL** [Gk *empeiria* 'experience' (*en* 'in' + *peira* 'trial'); the ancient Empirics were physicians who trusted observation over doctrine.] Grounded in observation or evidence rather than reasoning alone.
Ex. — “*The claim is plausible but not yet empirical — no one has gathered the data.*”
N.B. — Empirical ≠ quantitative. Fieldnotes and interviews are empirical evidence too.
8. **A PRIORI / A POSTERIORI** [L 'from what comes before' / 'from what comes after'.] On the classical account, knowable independently of experience (mathematics, definitions) versus knowable only through experience; the pairing is central to Kant.
Ex. — “*That a caste system exists cannot be established a priori; it must be shown a posteriori, with evidence.*”
9. **NORMATIVE** [L *norma* 'carpenter's square, rule'.] Concerning how things ought to be rather than how they are.
Ex. — “*The paper slides from an empirical claim (platforms amplify outrage) to a normative one (they should be regulated) without argument.*”
N.B. — The unmarked empirical-to-normative slide is among the commonest faults reviewers flag. Train yourself to spot it — in others and in your own drafts.
10. **POSITIVISM** [L *positivus* 'settled, laid down' (*ponere*, 'to place'); systematized by Auguste Comte in the 1830s.] The position that social life can be studied like nature: through observable facts, measurement, and the search for general laws.
Ex. — “*Early colonial sociology carried a positivist confidence that communities could be counted like minerals.*”
N.B. — In seminars, 'positivist' often functions as an accusation. Use it for a stated epistemological position, not as a synonym for 'quantitative'.
11. **VERSTEHEN** [German, 'to understand'; from Wilhelm Dilthey into Max Weber's method.] Interpretive understanding: grasping the meaning an action has for the actor — the task Weber made definitive of sociology.
Ex. — “*Counting temple visits is observation; grasping what a visit means to the visitor is Verstehen.*”
12. **HERMENEUTIC** [Gk *hermēneuein* 'to interpret, translate'; traditionally linked to Hermes, messenger of the gods.] Concerning interpretation, especially of texts and meaningful action. The hermeneutic circle: parts are understood through the whole, the whole through its parts.
Ex. — “*Read the village dispute hermeneutically — ask what it means to participants, not only what caused it.*”
13. **PHENOMENOLOGY** [Gk *phainomenon* 'that which appears' (*phainesthai*, 'to appear') + *logos*.] The study of experience as it is lived and appears to consciousness, prior to explanation. Founded by Husserl; carried into sociology by Alfred Schutz.
Ex. — “*A phenomenology of commuting attends to boredom, jostling, and waiting — not just transport statistics.*”

- 14. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION** [L. *construere* 'to build together'; Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966).] The process by which categories and institutions are made, stabilized, and taken for granted through social practice. Ian Hacking (1999) supplies the clarifying question: the construction of what, exactly?
Ex. — “Money is a social construction that will nonetheless pay, or fail to pay, the rent.”
N.B. — Constructed does not mean imaginary; see race & ethnicity.
- 15. OBJECTIVITY & SUBJECTIVITY** [L. *obiectum* 'thing thrown before' / *subiectum* 'thing thrown under' (*iacere*, 'to throw').] Knowledge framed as independent of any knower, versus knowledge as had by a situated subject. Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison (*Objectivity*, 2007) show that the ideal itself has a history.
Ex. — “The report performs objectivity — passive voice, no named author — while its categories carry a viewpoint.”
- 16. STANDPOINT** [plain English; standpoint theory from Sandra Harding (1986) and Patricia Hill Collins (*Black Feminist Thought*, 1990).] The claim that social location shapes what can be known, and that marginalized positions can yield sharper views of a social order than dominant ones.
Ex. — “From the domestic worker's standpoint, the household's informal economy is fully visible.”
- 17. SITUATED KNOWLEDGES** [L. *situs* 'position'; Donna Haraway's essay of that name (1988).] Haraway's argument that all knowledge is produced from somewhere — partial, embodied, accountable — against the illusion of a view from nowhere.
Ex. — “Declaring the dataset's provenance treats it as situated knowledge rather than as a view from nowhere.”
- 18. EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE** [Gk *epistēmē*; Miranda Fricker's term (*Epistemic Injustice*, 2007).] Wrong done to someone as a knower: testimonial injustice, when credibility is discounted by prejudice, and hermeneutical injustice, when a group lacks shared concepts to name its experience.
Ex. — “Before 'sexual harassment' existed as a term, complainants suffered hermeneutical injustice: the experience outran the vocabulary.”
- 19. EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH** [Boaventura de Sousa Santos's phrase (2014); he names the destruction of subordinated knowledge systems 'epistemicide'.] The demand that knowledges produced in struggles against colonialism and capitalism count as knowledge, not folklore.
Ex. — “Treating the fishers' tide-lore as data rather than anecdote is epistemologies of the South in practice.”
- 20. CLASSIFICATION** [L. *classis*, the property divisions of the Roman census, + *facere*.] The sorting of the world into categories with consequences. Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Leigh Star (*Sorting Things Out*, 1999) treat classification systems as infrastructure: invisible, standardizing, and political.
Ex. — “The census classification created the very communities it claimed merely to count.”
- 21. DETERMINISM & REDUCTIONISM** [L. *determinare* 'to bound' / *reducere* 'to lead back'.] Determinism: outcomes fully fixed by prior causes — economic, biological, technological. Reductionism: explaining a phenomenon entirely by its smallest parts.
Ex. — “Explaining a riot by brain chemistry is reductionism; explaining it by class position alone is determinism.”
N.B. — Both name failure modes rather than schools; use them with a specified mechanism.
- 22. TELEOLOGY** [Gk *telos* 'end, goal' + *logos*; the term dates to the eighteenth century (Christian Wolff).] Explanation by ends — treating history or development as movement toward a destination.
Ex. — “The modernization narrative is teleological: every society allegedly en route to the same terminus.”
- 23. HEURISTIC** [Gk *heuriskein* 'to find' — the root of *eureka*, 'I have found it'.] A rule of thumb or simplifying device that aids discovery without guaranteeing truth.
Ex. — “Treat the ideal type as a heuristic, not a description of any actual bureaucracy.”
N.B. — Often misused as a grander word for 'method'. A heuristic is deliberately rough; that is its value.
- 24. DIALECTIC** [Gk *dialektikē technē* 'the art of conversation' (*dia* 'through' + *legein* 'to speak').] Reasoning that advances through the tension between opposed positions; in Hegel and Marx, the process by which contradictions drive change.
Ex. — “Urban informality develops dialectically: regulation produces the very improvisation it forbids.”
N.B. — 'Dialectical' does not mean merely 'two-sided'; it names a dynamic, not a balance.
- 25. APORIA** [Gk *a-* 'without' + *poros* 'passage': no way through.] A genuine impasse in reasoning — a difficulty a text cannot resolve on its own terms; prized in deconstruction as a site of insight.
Ex. — “The consent policy reaches an aporia: it requires an agreement it renders impossible.”
- 26. GENEALOGY** [Gk *genea* 'descent, generation' + *logos*.] After Nietzsche and Foucault, a history of the present: tracing how a taken-for-granted concept — madness, criminality, 'the user' — was contingently assembled over time.
Ex. — “A genealogy of 'the digital native' finds its roots in marketing as much as in pedagogy.”
N.B. — In this usage it has nothing to do with family trees.
- 27. REFLEXIVITY** [L. *reflectere* 'to bend back' (*re-* 'back' + *flectere* 'to bend').] Turning analysis on oneself: how the researcher's position, tools, and concepts shape what gets found. **Positionality** (L. *positio*, 'placement') names where one stands — caste, class, gender, institution.
Ex. — “Her methods section is genuinely reflexive: it weighs how being a city-educated interviewer shaped what villagers said.”
N.B. — Reflexive ≠ reflective. Reflection is thinking back over something; reflexivity examines the thinker.

28. CRITIQUE [Gk *krinein* 'to separate, judge' → *kritikos* 'able to discern'.] Careful, reasoned evaluation of an argument's assumptions, evidence, and limits — including its strengths.

Ex. — “*Her critique praised the dataset while exposing the paper's circular definition of 'community'.*”

N.B. — Critique is not complaint, and *critical* in 'critical theory' means probing conditions of possibility, not being negative.

SECTION II.

THE METHODS TOOLKIT.

29. METHOD VS METHODOLOGY [Gk *meta* 'after, in pursuit of' + *hodos* 'road, way' (+ *logos*).] A method is a technique — interviews, surveys, archival work. A methodology is the reasoned account of why those techniques suit the question.

Ex. — “*The methodology chapter justifies pairing interviews with platform walkthroughs; the methods section describes doing them.*”

N.B. — Do not use 'methodology' as a grander word for 'methods'. Examiners notice.

30. QUALITATIVE / QUANTITATIVE [L *qualis* 'of what kind' / *quantus* 'how much'.] Inquiry into kinds, meanings, and processes versus inquiry into amounts and distributions.

Ex. — “*A survey shows how many households own drones; fieldwork shows what owning one means.*”

N.B. — Complementary logics, not ranked rivals. Many good designs mix them.

31. ETHNOGRAPHY [Gk *ethnos* 'a people' + *graphein* 'to write'.] Sustained fieldwork within a social world, and the written account it produces (see participant observation and thick description). George Marcus (1995) added the multi-sited variant: following people and things across locations.

Ex. — “*Six months in the repair market yielded an ethnography of improvised expertise.*”

32. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION [L *pars* 'part' + *observare* 'to watch over'.] Ethnography's core method: sustained involvement in a setting while systematically recording it; associated with Bronisław Malinowski's fieldwork (*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, 1922).

Ex. — “*Two seasons of participant observation at the flying club preceded any formal interview.*”

33. THICK DESCRIPTION [Gilbert Ryle's phrase, made methodological by Clifford Geertz (*The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973).] Description that renders not just behaviour but the layered meanings that make it intelligible — Ryle's example: a twitch versus a wink.

Ex. — “*Thin description records that the shop closed at noon; thick description explains the funeral it closed for.*”

34. DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY [Gk *ethnos* + *graphein* again.] Ethnographic method adapted to online and platform-mediated life: Christine Hine's virtual ethnography (2000), Robert Kozinets's netnography (2010).

Ex. — “*The digital ethnography followed the rumour across three applications and one wedding.*”

35. WALKTHROUGH METHOD [plain English; formalized by Ben Light, Jean Burgess, and Stefanie Duguay (*New Media & Society*, 2018).] Systematic, step-by-step examination of an app's screens, prompts, and defaults to surface its embedded expectations of the user.

Ex. — “*A walkthrough of the registration flow revealed which genders, relationships, and names the platform anticipates.*”

36. FIELD & FIELDWORK [OE *feld* 'open land'.] The site of research — historically 'elsewhere', increasingly anywhere, including online. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997) showed that 'the field' is constructed by the discipline, not found by it.

Ex. — “*Her field was a single arrivals lounge, visited daily for a year.*”

37. EMIC / ETIC [coined by the linguist Kenneth Pike (1954) from *phonemic* / *phonetic*.] Emic: categories as insiders use them. Etic: the analyst's external categories.

Ex. — “*'Time-pass' is an emic category among young men in north India; 'underemployment' is its etic cousin.*”

N.B. — Neither is truer. Good analysis moves deliberately between them.

38. GROUNDED THEORY [Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967).] Building theory upward from systematically coded data rather than testing a theory imported from outside.

Ex. — “*The category of 'defensive documentation' emerged from the interviews; grounded theory names that direction of travel.*”

39. SATURATION [L *saturare* 'to fill'.] The point in qualitative research where additional data largely repeats what is already known — Glaser and Strauss's criterion for when to stop.

Ex. — “*By the fourteenth interview the accounts converged; the study had reached saturation.*”

N.B. — A judgement to be argued for, not a number to be announced.

40. CODING [L *codex* 'book, tablet'.] In qualitative analysis, labelling segments of data with categories and building patterns from the labels — no software programming involved.

Ex. — “*Two researchers coded the transcripts independently and reconciled their category lists.*”

41. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS [the phrase enters linguistics with Zellig Harris (1952); the Foucauldian variant analyses statements and their conditions.] The systematic study of language in use — from the structure of conversation to the rules governing what can be said about 'development' or 'security'.

Ex. — “*A discourse analysis of the ministry's press releases traced how 'beneficiary' displaced 'citizen'.*”

42. ETHNOMETHODOLOGY [Gk *ethnos* + *methodos* + *logos*: the study of members' own methods; Harold Garfinkel (*Studies in Ethnomethodology*, 1967).] The study of the ordinary competencies by which people produce social order — turn-taking, queueing, appearing ordinary.

Ex. — “*Ethnomethodology asks how the queue enforces itself without a guard.*”

- 43. CASE STUDY** [L *casus* 'a falling, an occurrence' (*cadere*, 'to fall').] Intensive study of one instance in context. Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) defends the form against the charge that one cannot generalize from a single case.
Ex. — “One panchayat, studied closely, revealed mechanisms the all-India survey could only gesture toward.”
- 44. ARCHIVE & CORPUS** [Gk *arkheion* 'the magistrates' house' (*arkhē*, 'rule' — kin to monarchy and anarchy); L *corpus* 'body'.] The archive is an ordered body of records — never neutral, since ruling institutions decide what is kept. A corpus is a defined body of texts assembled for analysis.
Ex. — “The corpus comprised every editorial the newspaper published on migration between 2014 and 2024.”
- 45. HYPOTHESIS** [Gk *hypo* 'under' + *thesis* 'a placing': something set underneath, a foundation.] A testable proposition. Karl Popper's criterion: scientific claims must be **falsifiable** — capable, in principle, of being shown wrong.
Ex. — “‘Anonymity increases hostility’ is falsifiable; ‘people are complicated’ is not.”
- 46. VARIABLE** [L *variare* 'to change'.] Any property that takes different values across cases; the independent variable is the proposed influence, the dependent variable the outcome.
Ex. — “Treating caste as a ‘variable’ flattens what is also a lived structure — if it must be done, say so.”
- 47. OPERATIONALIZE** [L *opus*, *operis* 'work'; the demand for operational definitions comes from the physicist Percy Bridgman (1927).] To translate a concept into something observable and measurable.
Ex. — “How will the study operationalize ‘trust’ — survey items, repeated transactions, or something else entirely?”
N.B. — Every operationalization loses something. Name what yours loses.
- 48. SAMPLING** [via OFr *essample*, from L *exemplum*, literally 'a thing taken out' (*eximere*, 'to take out'); *sample* and *example* are doublets.] Selecting cases from a population. Random sampling gives every case an equal chance — a technical condition, not 'haphazard'; purposive and snowball sampling select for stated reasons.
Ex. — “The sample was purposive: platform drivers with more than five years on the road.”
N.B. — In methods writing, *random* is a precise term; do not use it to mean 'arbitrary'.
- 49. BIAS** [OFr *biais* 'slant, oblique'; ultimate origin uncertain.] Systematic distortion — in selection, measurement, or inference — as distinct from random error, which averages out.
Ex. — “Recruiting respondents through a single app built selection bias into the study's foundations.”
- 50. VALIDITY & RELIABILITY** [L *validus* 'strong' (*valere*, 'to be strong'); *rely*, via OFr *relier*, from L *religare*, 'to bind fast'.] Validity: did you measure what you claimed? Reliability: does the measure give consistent results? **Generalizability** asks how far findings travel; **triangulation** checks a claim against multiple sources or methods.
Ex. — “The scale is reliable — answers are consistent — but its validity as a measure of ‘digital literacy’ is doubtful.”
- 51. CORRELATION** [L *com-* 'together' + *relatio* 'a carrying back'.] Two things vary together. **Causation** (L *causa*) means one produces the other; correlation alone cannot establish it. A **spurious** correlation (L *spurius*, 'illegitimate') is produced by some third factor.
Ex. — “Smartphone ownership correlates with grades; household income likely drives both.”
- 52. SIGNIFICANT** [L *significare* 'to make a sign' (*signum* + *facere*).] In statistics: unlikely to be due to chance at a stated threshold. Nothing more.
Ex. — “The effect is statistically significant but small; whether it is substantively significant is a separate question.”
N.B. — Perhaps the most misread word in empirical writing. Significance is not importance.
- 53. ECOLOGICAL FALLACY** [Gk *oikos* 'household' + L *fallere* 'to deceive'; named by W. S. Robinson (1950).] Inferring facts about individuals from group-level statistics.
Ex. — “High-literacy districts show lower turnout, but concluding that literate individuals vote less commits the ecological fallacy.”
- 54. COUNTERFACTUAL** [L *contra* 'against' + *factum* 'what was done'.] The comparison implicit in every causal claim: what would have happened otherwise. Formalized in philosophy by David Lewis (1973) and in statistics as the potential-outcomes framework (Donald Rubin, 1974).
Ex. — “The evaluation lacks a counterfactual: we see the villages after the scheme, never the scheme's absence.”
- 55. MECHANISM** [Gk *mēchanē* 'contrivance, device'.] The cogs and wheels connecting cause to effect — the process by which X produces Y; analytical sociology (Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg, 1998) made mechanisms its unit of explanation.
Ex. — “The correlation is established; the paper's contribution is the mechanism: referral chains inside caste networks.”
- 56. INDUCTION / DEDUCTION / ABDUCTION** [L *ducere* 'to lead': *in* 'into', *de* 'down from', *ab* 'away'.] Induction reasons from cases to patterns; deduction from premises to necessary conclusions; abduction — C. S. Peirce's term — to the best explanation of a surprising observation, the engine of much qualitative theorizing.
Ex. — “The finding did not fit the theory, so we worked abductively: what would have to be true for this to make sense?”
- 57. RESEARCH ETHICS** [Gk *ēthos* 'character, custom'.] The obligations of inquiry: informed consent, anonymity or confidentiality as promised, and review by an institutional ethics committee — with the recognition that forms alone do not exhaust the obligations.
Ex. — “Consent was renegotiated when the study's focus shifted from the market to the households behind it.”
- 58. RESPONDENT / INFORMANT / INTERLOCUTOR** [L *respondere* 'to answer'; *informare* 'to give form to'; *inter* + *loqui* 'to speak between'.] Three names for the people research depends on, each with a politics: respondents answer instruments; informant carries an unfortunate policing echo; interlocutor marks conversation between parties.
Ex. — “The methods section calls them interlocutors, and the analysis treats them accordingly.”

SECTION III.
POWER, POLITICS, GOVERN-
ANCE.

59. POWER [L *posse* 'to be able' (*potis* 'able' + *esse* 'to be'); cousin of *potent*.] The capacity to shape action and outcomes — exercised over people, but also, in Foucault's account, productively: through norms, categories, and routines.

Ex. — “The form's dropdown menu exercises power: it decides which identities are selectable.”

60. AUTHORITY [L *autoritas*, from *auctor* 'originator' (*augere*, 'to increase') — the same root as *author*.] Power regarded as legitimate. Max Weber distinguished traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational authority.

Ex. — “The village elder's authority is traditional; the app's is legal-rational, encoded in its terms of service.”

61. LEGITIMACY [L *legitimus* 'lawful', from *lex*, *legis* 'law'.] The recognized rightfulness of power or of a claim — not the same thing as legality.

Ex. — “The eviction was legal; residents contested its legitimacy.”

62. HEGEMONY [Gk *hēgemonia* 'leadership' (*hēgemōn*, 'leader').] For Antonio Gramsci (*Prison Notebooks*, 1929–35), domination secured through consent — when a ruling group's worldview becomes everyone's common sense.

Ex. — “Merit alone explains success' functions hegemonically: it needs no enforcement because it is barely questioned.”

N.B. — Not a synonym for brute dominance; the consent is the point.

63. IDEOLOGY [Gk *idea* (from *idein*, 'to see') + *logos*; coined by Destutt de Tracy (1796) as a 'science of ideas'; Marx and Engels gave it the critical edge.] A system of ideas that organizes perception and — in the critical sense — presents particular interests as universal ones.

Ex. — “The market decides' is not a neutral description; it is ideology doing quiet work.”

N.B. — Other people's common sense looks like ideology; so does ours. Hence reflexivity.

64. DISCOURSE [L *discurrere* 'to run to and fro' (*dis-* 'apart' + *currere* 'to run').] More than talk. For Foucault, a historically specific system of statements that fixes what can be said, by whom, and with what authority — 'development discourse', 'security discourse'.

Ex. — “In policy discourse, farmers appear as 'beneficiaries', rarely as experts.”

65. PROPAGANDA [L *propagare* 'to propagate'; from the Vatican's *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (1622), the office for propagating the faith.] Organized persuasion in the service of power; Edward Bernays (*Propaganda*, 1928) described the practice, approvingly, as the engineering of consent.

Ex. — “The boundary between public information and propaganda is one each government redraws.”

66. GOVERNMENTALITY [Michel Foucault's term (lectures, 1977–78); *govern* descends, via L *gubernare*, from Gk *kybernan*, 'to steer' — see cybernetics.] The 'conduct of conduct': governing not only through law but by shaping norms, incentives, and self-management. Its companion **biopolitics** (Gk *bios*, 'life') names power aimed at populations — birth rates, health, productivity.

Ex. — “Fitness applications are governmentality in miniature: no one commands the user; the dashboard nudges.”

67. STATE VS NATION [L *status* 'standing' (*stare*, 'to stand') / *natio* 'a people, a birth' (*nasci*, 'to be born').] The state is the apparatus of rule — bureaucracy, courts, police — claiming supreme authority over a territory (see sovereignty). The nation is an imagined community of belonging. The hyphen in nation-state marks an aspiration, not a fact.

Ex. — “Kurds form a nation without a state; the United Nations, despite its name, is an association of states.”

68. NATIONALISM [L *natio* again.] The doctrine that nations exist and deserve states. Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*, 1983) analysed nations as communities imagined through print; Partha Chatterjee (*The Nation and Its Fragments*, 1993) countered that anticolonial nationalisms imagined differently, from an inner domain the colonizer could not enter.

Ex. — “The textbook controversy is nationalism conducting its imagination in public.”

69. SOVEREIGNTY [OFr *soverain*, ultimately from L *super* 'above'.] Supreme authority over a territory, classically theorized by Jean Bodin (1576). Achille Mbembe's 'necropolitics' (2003) examines sovereignty exercised as the power to expose populations to death.

Ex. — “Airspace disputes make sovereignty visible: the border extends upward.”

70. CITIZENSHIP [L *civis* 'citizen'.] Membership in a political community, with its rights and duties; T. H. Marshall (1950) traced its civil, political, and social layers.

Ex. — “The document proves citizenship; the queue outside the office tests its social layer.”

71. JUSTICE [L *iustitia*, from *ius* 'right, law'.] The rightful ordering of benefits, burdens, and standing. John Rawls (1971) systematized distributive justice; Nancy Fraser (1995) distinguished claims of redistribution from claims of recognition — adding, later, representation.

Ex. — “The dispute is not only about wages (redistribution) but about being addressed with respect (recognition): two grammars of justice.”

72. RIGHTS [L *rectus* 'straight, right'.] Entitlements held against others or the state — natural, legal, human. Hannah Arendt (1951) exposed the circularity beneath them: the stateless lose 'the right to have rights'.

Ex. — “The court recognized the right; the queue outside the district office rationed it.”

- 73. MIGRANT / REFUGEE / ASYLUM-SEEKER** [L *migrare* 'to move'; *refugium* 'a shelter' (*fugere*, 'to flee'); Gk *asylon* 'inviolable place'.] Legally distinct categories often collapsed in reporting: a refugee, under the 1951 Convention, has crossed a border fleeing a well-founded fear of persecution; an asylum-seeker's claim is pending; migrant is the undefined umbrella.
Ex. — “*Calling refugees 'migrants' is not a stylistic choice; it dissolves a legal claim.*”
- 74. CARCERAL & ABOLITION** [L *carcer* 'prison'; *abolere* 'to destroy'.] Carceral names the logic of confinement extending beyond prisons — Foucault's 'carceral archipelago' (1975). Abolition, in Angela Davis's argument (*Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 2003), asks what institutions would make prisons unnecessary.
Ex. — “*The school's biometric gates import a carceral logic into attendance.*”
- 75. CIVIL SOCIETY** [L *civis* 'citizen'.] The sphere of association between household and state: unions, religious bodies, NGOs, clubs, presses. Gramsci located hegemony's workshops here.
Ex. — “*The campaign moved through civil society — resident welfare associations and WhatsApp groups — long before it reached a court.*”
- 76. POLITICAL SOCIETY** [Partha Chatterjee's term (*The Politics of the Governed*, 2004).] The domain — distinct from civil society — where most of the governed negotiate with the state through welfare categories, paralegal arrangements, and collective claims.
Ex. — “*The settlement's electricity was won in political society: not as a right, but as a negotiated exception.*”
- 77. PUBLIC SPHERE** [L *publicus* (from *populus*, 'the people'); Jürgen Habermas (1962).] The arena in which private persons reason together about common affairs. Nancy Fraser (1990) countered that subordinated groups form counterpublics with arenas of their own.
Ex. — “*The question for platform studies is whether a feed can host a public sphere or only its simulation.*”
- 78. DEMOCRACY** [Gk *dēmos* 'the people' + *kratos* 'rule'.] Rule by the people — a form of government and, in B. R. Ambedkar's insistence, a mode of associated living grounded in fraternity, without which the form is hollow.
Ex. — “*Elections measure democracy's form; the classroom, the canteen, and the housing market measure its substance.*”
- 79. POPULISM** [L *populus* 'the people'.] A politics claiming to speak for 'the real people' against corrupt elites; Cas Mudde (2004) describes it as a thin ideology that attaches to hosts on the left and the right.
Ex. — “*The speech was structurally populist: one people, one betrayal, one voice.*”
- 80. SECULARISM** [L *saeculum* 'an age, the temporal world'; the English term coined by George Holyoake (1851).] The separation of religious authority from state power — with distinct models: strict separation, establishment, and the Indian model Rajeev Bhargava characterizes as principled distance.
Ex. — “*Indian secularism was never designed as indifference to religion; it was designed as even-handed engagement with it.*”
- 81. COMMUNALISM** [L *communis* 'shared'.] In South Asian usage, the politics of antagonism between religious communities — nearly the opposite of the word's Anglo-American sense of communal harmony. Bipan Chandra (1984) analysed it as a modern ideology, not an ancient reflex.
Ex. — “*Separate colonial electorates institutionalized communalism by making religion the unit of representation.*”
N.B. — Specify the regional sense when writing for international journals; see also secularism.
- 82. COLONIALISM & IMPERIALISM** [L *colonia* 'settlement' (*colere*, 'to cultivate' — the root of culture) / *imperium* 'command'.] Imperialism: the policy and ideology of extending rule. Colonialism: its implantation through settlement, administration, and extraction. Aimé Césaire (*Discourse on Colonialism*, 1950) indicted the 'civilizing' claim from within its own language.
Ex. — “*The railway served imperialism's map and colonialism's ledger at once.*”
- 83. EMPIRE** [L *imperium*, from *imperare* 'to command'.] Rule over diverse peoples and territories without their equal membership; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (*Empire*, 2000) extended the term to diffuse, networked sovereignty.
Ex. — “*Every empire produces knowledge about the ruled; see orientalism.*”
- 84. POSTCOLONIAL** [L *post* 'after' + *colonia*.] Concerning the enduring aftermath of colonialism in knowledge, culture, and power — not simply the period after independence. The 'post' marks a problem, not a date.
Ex. — “*The postcolonial question is not whether the empire ended but where it went.*”
N.B. — A field (Said, Spivak, Bhabha) as well as a condition; do not use it as a synonym for 'post-independence'.
- 85. DECOLONIAL** [*de-* + L *colonia*.] A project targeting the colonality of power — Anibal Quijano's term (2000) for the racial and epistemic hierarchies that outlive formal empire. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (*Decolonising the Mind*, 1986) located the struggle in language itself.
Ex. — “*Renaming the building is symbolic; a decolonial syllabus redistributes epistemic authority.*”
- 86. SUBALTERN** [L *sub* 'under' + *alternus* 'other'; originally a junior military officer.] Gramsci's word for groups subordinated outside dominant institutions; developed by the Subaltern Studies historians (Ranajit Guha) and sharpened by Gayatri Spivak's question — 'Can the subaltern speak?' (1988) — about who gets heard, and through whose representations.
Ex. — “*The archive preserves the landlord's petition; the subaltern tenant survives only as a name in its margin.*”
- 87. RESISTANCE** [L *resistere* 'to take a stand against' (*re-* + *sistere*).] Opposition to power, including the everyday, undeclared forms James Scott documented (*Weapons of the Weak*, 1985). Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) cautioned against romanticizing it, proposing resistance instead as a diagnostic of power.
Ex. — “*Foot-dragging, misfiled forms, and strategic incomprehension: resistance rarely announces itself.*”

88. NEOLIBERALISM [Gk *neos* 'new' + L *liber* 'free'.] The late-twentieth-century programme extending market logic into ever more domains: privatization, deregulation, competition as the template for conduct (David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2005).

Ex. — “Ranking hospitals like restaurants is neoliberal rationality at work.”

N.B. — Often deployed as an all-purpose pejorative. Specify the mechanism you mean.

89. GOVERNANCE [L *gubernare*, from Gk *kybernan* 'to steer' (see cybernetics).] Steering conducted beyond formal government — by markets, standards, platforms, and networks; R. A. W. Rhodes (1996) summarized it as governing without government.

Ex. — “Content policy is governance: rules with public consequences, made by a private board.”

90. TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY [L *trans* 'through' + *parere* 'to appear'; *accountable* ultimately from L *computare*, 'to reckon'.] Seeing into power, and holding it to answer. Mike Ananny and Kate Crawford (2018) argue that for algorithmic systems, seeing inside is not the same as understanding or restraining them.

Ex. — “The audit produced transparency without accountability: everything visible, nothing answerable.”

SECTION IV.

SOCIETY AND STRUCTURE.

91. SOCIETY [L *societas* 'fellowship', from *socius* 'companion'.] The web of relations and institutions within which lives unfold. Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) contrasted *Gemeinschaft* — community, bonds of kinship and place — with *Gesellschaft* — society, impersonal and contractual ties.

Ex. — “The move from village to metro is often narrated as a fall from community into society.”

92. SOCIAL FACT [Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895).] Ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that are external to any individual and exercise constraint — language, law, currency, fashion.

Ex. — “No individual chose the dowry system this morning, yet it constrains the morning's negotiations: a social fact.”

93. INSTITUTION [L *instituere* 'to set up' (*in* + *statuere*).] Not a building: a durable, patterned set of rules and expectations — marriage, the examination, the market, the queue.

Ex. — “The coaching centre has become an institution in its own right, complete with rites, hierarchies, and folklore.”

94. TOTAL INSTITUTION [L *totus* 'whole' + *instituere*; Erving Goffman, *Asylums* (1961).] A setting that absorbs the whole person — prisons, asylums, barracks, boarding schools — resocializing inmates under a single authority and timetable.

Ex. — “The hostel's gates, roll-calls, and uniform schedule approached the condition of a total institution.”

95. STRUCTURE [L *struere* 'to build, pile up'.] The enduring arrangements — class, caste, gender, law, language — that pattern action beyond any individual's choosing.

Ex. — “Calling the outcome 'structural' means it would persist even if every individual meant well.”

96. AGENCY [L *agere* 'to do, to drive'.] The capacity of persons to act, choose, and improvise within — and against — structures. The structure–agency debate asks how much of social life each explains.

Ex. — “Gig workers exercise agency, gaming the algorithm inside a structure they did not design.”

N.B. — Agency is not freedom from constraint; it is action under constraint.

97. SOCIALIZATION [L *socius* again.] The lifelong process by which people internalize the norms, categories, and skills of their groups — how the social gets inside.

Ex. — “By age six, children have been socialized into who may be addressed as tu and who must be addressed as aap.”

98. HIDDEN CURRICULUM [Philip Jackson's term (*Life in Classrooms*, 1968).] What schooling teaches without announcing it: queueing, deference, punctuality, whose language counts (see curriculum).

Ex. — “The timetable is the curriculum; the seating plan is the hidden one.”

99. ROLE & STATUS [OFr *rolle*, the roll of paper carrying an actor's part; L *status* 'standing'.] Status is a position in a structure; role is the conduct expected of it. Ralph Lin-ton (1936) distinguished ascribed statuses, assigned at birth, from achieved ones.

Ex. — “Her caste status is ascribed, her professional status achieved; the interview made both audible.”

100. NORMS & DEVIANCE [L *norma*; *de* + *via*, 'off the road'.] Norms are shared expectations; deviance is conduct labelled as violating them. Howard Becker (*Outsiders*, 1963): deviance is created by the labelling, not inherent in the act.

Ex. — “The same conduct is 'networking' in one office and 'lobbying' in another; the label does the sociological work.”

101. SOLIDARITY [L *solidus* 'whole'; from the legal phrase *in solidum*, liability for the whole.] The cohesion binding a group. Durkheim (1893) contrasted mechanical solidarity, based on likeness, with organic solidarity, based on the interdependence of differences.

Ex. — “The strike converted the workforce's organic interdependence into declared solidarity.”

102. HABITUS [L *habitus* 'condition, bearing' (*habere*, 'to have, to hold'); Pierre Bourdieu's revival of a scholastic term.] Durable dispositions — tastes, postures, instincts — laid down by upbringing, which make privilege feel like naturalness.

Ex. — “Interview panels reward the habitus of the convent-schooled candidate and call it 'confidence'.”

103. STRATIFICATION [L *stratum* 'a layer, something spread out' (*sternere*, 'to spread' — also the root of *street*) + *facere*.] Society's layering into ranked groups by class, caste, status, and power.

Ex. — “The city now stratifies vertically: service lifts and residents' lifts in the same tower.”

- 104. MERITOCRACY** [L. *meritum* 'that which is earned' + Gk *kratos*; coined satirically by Michael Young (*The Rise of the Meritocracy*, 1958).] Rule by the measurably able. Young invented the word for a dystopia in which merit hardens into hereditary caste; the term escaped into praise — a fate he publicly regretted.
Ex. — “*Merit is measured by examinations; examinations are prepared for with money; the meritocracy launders the advantage.*”
- 105. ANOMIE** [Gk *a-* 'without' + *nomos* 'norm, law'.] Émile Durkheim's term for normlessness — when rapid change or boundless aspiration leaves conduct unregulated; he tied it to rising suicide (1897).
Ex. — “*Boomtown anomie: the money arrived a decade before any shared sense of how to live with it.*”
N.B. — Not a learned word for *anomaly*.
- 106. BUREAUCRACY** [Fr *bureau* 'desk, office' (from *burel*, the woollen cloth that covered desks) + Gk *kratos* 'rule': government from desks.] Weber's name for administration by files, offices, and rules — formidably efficient, and part of modernity's broader **rationalization**, which he pictured as a 'steel-hard casing' (long quoted as the 'iron cage').
Ex. — “*The scholarship exists; the bureaucracy requires a certificate no office issues.*”
- 107. CHARISMA** [Gk *charisma* 'gift of grace' (*charis*, 'favour'); Weber borrowed it from theology.] Authority resting on followers' belief in a person's extraordinary qualities — inherently unstable, and always facing 'routinization' after the leader.
Ex. — “*The founder's charisma held the movement together; the committee that succeeded him could not.*”
N.B. — In Weber it is a type of authority, not a synonym for charm.
- 108. STIGMA** [Gk *stigma* 'a brand, a tattoo-mark' (*stizein*, 'to prick'), once burned into slaves and criminals.] Erving Goffman's term (1963) for an attribute that discredits a person in interaction, forcing the management of a 'spoiled identity'.
Ex. — “*Tenants learn to conceal the old address; the neighbourhood itself carries stigma.*”
- 109. DRAMATURGY** [Gk *drama* 'deed, play' + *ergon* 'work'.] Erving Goffman's theatrical frame (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1956/1959): social life as performance, with front-stage impression management and back-stage relaxation.
Ex. — “*The showroom is front stage; the staff canteen, where the accent drops, is back stage.*”
- 110. MORAL PANIC** [L. *moralis* (Cicero's coinage for Gk *ēthikos*) + Gk *panikos*, 'of Pan', the god of sudden terror.] Stanley Cohen's term (1972) for episodes in which media and authorities amplify a group or practice into a threat to societal values, casting its members as 'folk devils'.
Ex. — “*Every new medium receives its moral panic: the novel, the cinema hall, the video game, the reel.*”
- 111. SOCIAL MOVEMENT** [L. *movere* 'to move'.] Sustained collective challenge to authorities. Movements succeed partly through framing — the interpretive work, analysed by David Snow and Robert Benford (1988), of naming grievances and proposing remedies.
Ex. — “*The movement's decisive act was a reframing: what had been 'fate' became 'injustice'.*”
- 112. EVERYDAY LIFE** [plain English; theorized by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1980).] The ordinary as an analytical object. De Certeau contrasted the strategies of institutions with the tactics by which users make do — shortcuts, workarounds, quiet repurposings.
Ex. — “*Commuters' unofficial paths across the campus lawn are everyday tactics answering the planners' strategy.*”
- 113. TIME-DISCIPLINE & TEMPORALITY** [L. *tempus* 'time'.] E. P. Thompson (1967) traced how industrial capitalism replaced task-oriented time with clock-discipline; temporality names the socially organized experience of time — deadlines, waiting, seasons, shifts.
Ex. — “*The delivery application inherits the factory whistle: time-discipline by notification.*”
- 114. SPACE & PLACE** [L. *spatium* 'expanse'; *platea* 'broad street' (Gk *plateia*).] Space as abstract extension; place as space thickened with meaning (Yi-Fu Tuan, 1977). Henri Lefebvre (1974) argued that space is socially produced; Doreen Massey (1991) that places are meeting points of relations, not bounded essences.
Ex. — “*The flyover produced space for traffic and destroyed a place for evening walkers.*”
- 115. GENTRIFICATION** [coined by the sociologist Ruth Glass (1964) from *gentry*.] The class remaking of urban neighbourhoods: investment and the arrival of wealthier residents, displacement of poorer ones.
Ex. — “*The café is the visible instrument of gentrification; the rent ledger is the operative one.*”
- 116. MODERNITY** [L. *modernus*, from *modo* 'just now'.] The social order of industrial capitalism, bureaucratic states, and reflexive knowledge. S. N. Eisenstadt's 'multiple modernities' (2000) rejects a single Western template.
Ex. — “*The township sells modernity by the square foot: clock towers, gated enclaves, a curated past.*”
- 117. TRADITION** [L. *tradere* 'to hand over' — the root, by another route, of *treason*.] What is presented as handed down. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (*The Invention of Tradition*, 1983) showed how much of it is recent manufacture.
Ex. — “*The 'ancient' ceremony is four decades old; invention is how tradition maintains its supply.*”
- 118. RISK** [It. *risco* / *rischio*; ultimate origin uncertain.] Calculable exposure to harm. Ulrich Beck (*Risk Society*, 1986) argued that late modernity increasingly distributes bads — pollution, contamination — alongside goods.
Ex. — “*The floodplain apartments price risk into the rent of those least able to refuse it.*”

119. PUBLIC & PRIVATE [L *publicus* (from *populus*) / *privatus* 'withdrawn' (*privare*, 'to deprive').] A shifting boundary, not a natural one. Feminist analysis — condensed in Carol Hanisch's 1969 formulation that the personal is political — showed how the label 'private' shields power from scrutiny.

Ex. — “*Calling domestic work 'private' is precisely what kept it off the ledgers.*”

SECTION V.

ECONOMY, WORK, AND VALUE.

120. CAPITALISM [L *capitale* (see capital); the '-ism' generalized in nineteenth-century debate.] An economic order in which production is organized for profit through markets and wage labour. Max Weber (*The Protestant Ethic*, 1905) traced one of its cultural preconditions.

Ex. — “*The question is not whether the village has entered capitalism but on whose terms.*”

121. CLASS [L *classis*, the property divisions of the Roman census.] Position within economic relations: for Marx, defined by relation to the means of production; for Weber, by market-shaped life chances. E. P. Thompson (1963) insisted class is a relationship that happens, not a static box.

Ex. — “*The metro line redrew the city's class map before the census could record it.*”

122. CAPITAL [L *caput*, *capitis* 'head' — as in heads of livestock; *cattle* and *chattel* grew from the same root.] For Marx, wealth set in motion to produce more wealth. Bourdieu extended it to convertible non-monetary assets: cultural capital (credentials, taste), social capital (connections), symbolic capital (recognition).

Ex. — “*An old boys' network is social capital compounding quietly, like interest.*”

123. LABOUR [L *labor* 'toil, exertion'.] Human productive activity and, as wage labour, the commodity workers sell. Arlie Hochschild (*The Managed Heart*, 1983) named emotional labour: the management of feeling as part of the job.

Ex. — “*The flight attendant's composure is emotional labour: produced to specification, invisibly taxing.*”

124. ALIENATION [L *alienus* 'belonging to another' (*alius*, 'other').] Marx's account (1844) of estrangement under capitalism: from the product, the process, other people, and one's own capacities.

Ex. — “*She assembles a hundred phones a day and cannot afford one — alienation in its plainest form.*”

125. COMMODIFICATION [L *commodus* 'convenient, of due measure'.] Converting things, capacities, or relations not previously for sale into marketable goods: care, attention, water, data.

Ex. — “*The application commodifies neighbourly exchange: borrowing a ladder now carries a platform fee.*”

126. COMMODITY FETISHISM [Port. *feitiço* 'charm, spell' (L *facticius*, 'manufactured'), a trader's word for West African ritual objects.] Marx's diagnosis (1867): under capitalism, relations between people appear as relations between things — prices seem to move by themselves while the labour behind them disappears.

Ex. — “*The product launch enacts commodity fetishism: the labour of assembly vanishes, and the object appears to bear value in itself.*”

127. REIFICATION [L *res*, *rei* 'thing' + *facere*: literally 'thing-making'.] Treating human-made relations as if they were natural objects with lives of their own (Georg Lukács, 1923).

Ex. — “*The market punished the rupee' — reification lets an abstraction do the punishing while decision-makers vanish.*”

128. CONSUMPTION [L *consumere* 'to use up'.] The purchase and use of goods as social practice. Thorstein Veblen (1899) named conspicuous consumption: spending staged to display status.

Ex. — “*The wedding's scale was conspicuous consumption functioning as a public credit rating.*”

129. PRECARIITY [L *precarius* 'obtained by begging' (*prex*, *precis*, 'prayer'): held at another's pleasure.] Insecure existence — of work, housing, status — increasingly the norm of flexible economies (Guy Standing's 'precariat', 2011).

Ex. — “*A three-month contract, renewable at the platform's discretion: the etymology of precarity, lived.*”

130. INFORMAL ECONOMY [L *informis* 'without shape'; the term from Keith Hart's Ghana research (1973).] Economic activity outside formal regulation and record — the majority condition of work in much of the world, not its exception.

Ex. — “*The report's 'unorganized sector' line compresses most of the country's working life into a residual category.*”

131. JUGAAD [Hindi–Punjabi *jugaad*, an improvised fix or workaround.] Frugal improvisation under constraint — celebrated as innovation from below, and criticized, as in Amit Rai's *Jugaad Time* (2019), as a romance that normalizes scarcity.

Ex. — “*The clinic's jugaad kept the machine running; the budget line it substituted for never arrived.*”

132. DEVELOPMENT [OFr *desveloper* 'to unwrap'.] Planned economic and social improvement. Arturo Escobar (*Encountering Development*, 1995) analysed it as a discourse that produced 'the Third World' as an object of intervention.

Ex. — “*In development discourse, the river becomes 'untapped potential' before it becomes a dam.*”

133. GLOBAL SOUTH [popularized after the Brandt Report (1980) drew its North–South line.] A political designation for regions structurally disadvantaged within the world economy — a relation, not a hemisphere: geographic souths contain norths, and the reverse.

Ex. — “*The term Global South names a position in the world economy, not a latitude.*”

134. SOCIAL REPRODUCTION & CARE [L *re* + *producere* 'to bring forth again'.] The daily and generational work — feeding, raising, nursing, maintaining — that produces labour power itself; feminist analysis from Silvia Federici's *Wages Against Housework* (1975) onward made its unpaid economy visible.

Ex. — “*Every shift at the factory is subsidized by an unlogged shift at home.*”

135. MARKET & EMBEDDEDNESS [L *mercari* 'to trade' (*merx*, 'goods').] A system of exchange. Karl Polanyi (*The Great Transformation*, 1944) argued that markets are embedded in social institutions, and that a fully self-regulating market is a utopia with casualties.

Ex. — “*The land market arrived by statute; the protections it displaced had been embedded in custom.*”

136. MORAL ECONOMY [E. P. Thompson (1971), extended by James Scott (*The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, 1976).] The shared norms of fairness — just price, subsistence first — that communities enforce against market logic, sometimes by riot.

Ex. — “*The protest was a moral economy in action: not against prices as such, but against prices without obligation.*”

137. DEBT [L *debitum* 'what is owed' (*debere*).] Obligation quantified. David Graeber (*Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, 2011) traced its moral vocabulary — how 'owing' organizes hierarchy long before money does.

Ex. — “*The household ledger records the loans; the wedding records the debts that cannot be written down.*”

138. ASSETIZATION [OFr *asez* 'enough' (L *ad satis*) — an asset is originally 'sufficient means'; Kean Birch and Fabian Muniesa, eds., *Assetization* (2020).] Turning things — housing, data, genomes, degrees — into assets: owned, income-bearing, and valued by expected future returns rather than present use.

Ex. — “*Once student housing is assetized, the rent is set by a spreadsheet on another continent.*”

SECTION VI.

CULTURE AND DIFFERENCE.

139. CULTURE [L *cultura* 'cultivation' (*colere*, 'to till, to tend') — the same root as *colony* (*colonus*, 'settler, farmer').] The learned, shared repertoire of meanings and practices through which groups live — in anthropology, everything from cuisine to cosmology.

Ex. — “*What the recruiters described as 'culture fit' tracked caste and class more closely than any stated criterion.*”

N.B. — That *culture* and *colony* share a root is worth a moment's pause.

140. CULTURAL RELATIVISM [L *relativus* (*referre*, 'to carry back').] Franz Boas's methodological principle: understand practices within their own context before judging by external standards — the corrective to **ethnocentrism** (Gk *ethnos* + *kentron*, 'centre'; W. G. Sumner, 1906), taking one's own group as the measure of all things.

Ex. — “*Relativism here is a method of understanding, not a refusal ever to judge.*”

141. ESSENTIALISM [L *essentia* 'being' (*esse*, 'to be').] Treating a category — woman, Hindu, the poor — as possessing a fixed inner nature that explains its members.

Ex. — “*“Women are naturally caring” is essentialism doing the work of assigning unpaid labour.*”

N.B. — Spivak's 'strategic essentialism' names the deliberate, provisional use of such categories in politics.

142. INTERSECTIONALITY [L *inter* 'between' + *secare* 'to cut' — as roads intersect.] Kimberlé Crenshaw's term (1989) for how axes of disadvantage — race, gender, class, caste — combine into predicaments invisible when each is analysed alone. Her image was a traffic intersection.

Ex. — “*A Dalit woman's position in the labour market is not caste plus gender; it is their intersection.*”

143. CASTE [Port. *casta* 'lineage, breed' (L *castus*, 'pure'), applied by sixteenth-century traders to Indian society.] Hereditary, endogamous ranking. The English word bundles *varna* (the fourfold textual scheme) with *jati* (the thousands of birth-groups) — and *jati*, from Sanskrit *jan-* 'to be born', is cognate with *genus*, *kin*, and *nation*.

Ex. — “*Colonial censuses did not invent caste, but counting hardened it.*”

N.B. — For the category's demolition from within, begin with B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste* (1936).

144. DALIT [Marathi, from Skt *dal-* 'broken, ground down'.] The self-chosen name of communities stigmatized as 'untouchable' — current in Ambedkar's milieu and made a banner by the Dalit Panthers (1972); preferred to official euphemism precisely because it names the breaking.

Ex. — “*Dalit is a political identity; the Scheduled Caste list is the state's category, not the movement's.*”

145. SANSKRITIZATION [Sanskrit + '-ization'; M. N. Srinivas (1952; elaborated 1956).] Srinivas's term for upward mobility pursued by adopting the ritual practices of higher castes — vegetarianism, new deities, stricter gender codes. He also coined 'dominant caste' (1959) for locally powerful landholding groups.

Ex. — “*The family's new dietary rules read, in Srinivas's terms, as sanskritization within one generation.*”

146. PURITY & POLLUTION [L *purus* 'clean' / *polluere* 'to defile'.] Mary Douglas (*Purity and Danger*, 1966) analysed pollution beliefs as boundary maintenance — dirt, famously, as matter out of place. Applications to caste hierarchy (Louis Dumont, 1966) remain contested.

Ex. — “*The kitchen's separate utensils enact purity rules the household would deny holding.*”

147. GENDER [L *genus*, *generis* 'kind, birth' — the family of *genre* and *genus*.] The social organization and meaning of sexed difference — roles, norms, hierarchies — distinguished from biological sex in 1970s feminist scholarship.

Ex. — “*The census records sex; the seating order in the panchayat records gender.*”

N.B. — Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí (*The Invention of Women*, 1997) argues that gender as a governing category was a colonial imposition in Yorùbá society — a reminder that the sex/gender frame has a geography.

- 148. PATRIARCHY** [Gk *patēr* 'father' + *arkhein* 'to rule'.] A social order in which authority and inheritance run through men; retheorized by feminism as a system (Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 1970) and made a teaching vocabulary in South Asia by Kamla Bhasin (1993).
Ex. — “*The property records state the patriarchy plainly: one column of names, one gender.*”
- 149. HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY** [see hegemony; Raewyn Connell (*Gender and Power*, 1987; *Masculinities*, 1995).] The culturally exalted pattern of manhood that legitimates men's dominance — sustaining hierarchy among masculinities as well as over women.
Ex. — “*The recruitment poster sells hegemonic masculinity: command, hardness, and the promise of deference.*”
- 150. HETERONORMATIVITY & QUEER** [Gk *heteros* 'other' + L *norma*; *queer* possibly from German *quer*, 'oblique'.] Heteronormativity (Michael Warner, 1991): the ordering of institutions around heterosexuality as the default. Queer, reclaimed from slur, names both identities and a critical practice — queer theory (Teresa de Lauretis, 1991) — that unsettles such defaults.
Ex. — “*The housing form is heteronormative by design: one column for 'husband', one for 'wife'.*”
- 151. RACE & ETHNICITY** [*race*: origin disputed (It. *razza*); *ethnicity*: Gk *ethnos* 'a people'.] Race classifies bodies through hierarchies built under slavery and empire — a process Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1986) analyse as racial formation. Ethnicity marks belonging by descent, language, or custom. Both are social constructions with brutally real effects.
Ex. — “*“Socially constructed” does not mean unreal: constructed things — borders, prisons, races — organize life and death.*”
N.B. — For the lived doubling racialization produces, see double consciousness.
- 152. DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS** [W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).] Du Bois's account of living behind the 'veil': experiencing oneself both from within and through the eyes of a contemptuous majority — a twoness that is also a second sight.
Ex. — “*The memoir's narrator drafts every sentence twice, once for herself and once for the gaze she cannot evict: double consciousness on the page.*”
- 153. OTHERING** [OE *ōther*; the analytic usage runs from Simone de Beauvoir's account of woman as the Other (*The Second Sex*, 1949) through Gayatri Spivak (1985).] The discursive production of a group as fundamentally different and lesser — the constitutive outside against which a 'we' is formed.
Ex. — “*The security briefing performs othering with adjectives alone.*”
- 154. GAZE** [ME *gasen*, probably Scandinavian.] A structured way of looking that carries power: Laura Mulvey's male gaze in cinema (1975); Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952) rendered the racializing gaze from the position of its object; the colonial gaze organized photography, census, and survey.
Ex. — “*The heritage brochure views the neighbourhood through an investor's gaze.*”
- 155. PERFORMATIVITY** [from *perform*, OFr *parfournir* 'to carry through, complete'.] J. L. Austin's insight that some utterances do things ('I promise'; 'I now pronounce you...'); Judith Butler's extension (1990): gender is realized through repeated, stylized acts rather than expressed from a prior essence.
Ex. — “*The wedding vow does not describe a marriage; it performs one.*”
N.B. — Not the colloquial 'performative' (= insincere). In theory, performative means efficacious, not inauthentic.
- 156. LIMINALITY** [L *limen*, *liminis* 'threshold'.] The in-between phase of rites of passage (Arnold van Gennep, 1909), where ordinary statuses dissolve; Victor Turner made it central to anthropology — 'betwixt and between'.
Ex. — “*The year between degree and first employment is modern liminality: no longer a student, not yet anything else.*”
- 157. SACRED & PROFANE** [L *sacer* 'set apart' — uncannily, both holy and accursed; *profanus* 'before the temple' (*pro* + *fanum*): outside it.] Durkheim's elementary distinction (1912): the sacred is what a group sets apart and shields with prohibitions — **taboo** (Tongan *tabu*, carried into English from Cook's voyages, 1777) — and tends with **ritual** (L *ritus*); the profane is the everyday.
Ex. — “*The examination hall is organized like sacred space: silence, prohibitions, ritual invigilation, a fear of pollution.*”
- 158. RELIGION (AS A CATEGORY)** [L *religio*, of disputed derivation — *religare* 'to bind' or *relegere* 'to read again'.] Talal Asad (*Genealogies of Religion*, 1993) showed that 'religion' as a universal, belief-centred category has a specific Christian and colonial genealogy — a caution before comparing 'religions' as like units.
Ex. — “*The census box marked 'religion' presumes a portable category that the practices overflow.*”
- 159. THE GIFT** [OE *gift*; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift* (1925).] Mauss's demonstration that gifts oblige — giving, receiving, and returning bind persons and groups; the 'free' gift is the limit case, not the rule.
Ex. — “*The festival hamper from the contractor is a gift in Mauss's sense: it will be repaid in access.*”
- 160. KINSHIP** [OE *gynn* 'family, kind' — the *gen-* family again.] The social organization of relatedness — descent, marriage, alliance — including fictive kinship, where the idiom of family extends beyond it.
Ex. — “*The union hall runs on fictive kinship: every senior member is 'uncle' until the strike vote.*”
- 161. DIASPORA** [Gk *dia* 'across' + *speirein* 'to sow' (kin to *spore*): a scattering of seed; originally the Jewish dispersion.] Communities sustaining identification across distance from a homeland.
Ex. — “*The diaspora funds the temple, follows the home elections closely, and sustains the family's deliberations across three time zones.*”
- 162. HYBRIDITY** [L *hybrida* 'crossbred'.] Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, 1994): the mixed cultural forms produced in colonial encounter, whose in-betweenness — including a mimicry that repeats the colonizer with a difference — unsettles the colonizer's authority.
Ex. — “*The convent-school Tamil of the novel is hybridity as narrative voice.*”

163. INDIGENOUS [L *indigena* 'born in a place' (*indu* 'within' + *gignere* 'to beget').] Peoples with historical priority in a territory and distinct institutions, typically marginalized by later states; the contested Indian cognate is *Adivasi*, 'original dweller'.

Ex. — “*Indigenous knowledge*’ is not folklore awaiting validation; it is expertise with its own protocols.”

164. ORIENTALISM [L *oriens* 'the rising sun, the East'; its pair is *occidens*, 'the setting'.] Edward Said's argument (1978) that Western scholarship and art constructed 'the Orient' as exotic, timeless, and inferior — knowledge organized by and for empire (see othering).

Ex. — “*The aerial documentary that frames the bazaar as chaos reproduces orientalist convention with newer instruments.*”

165. VERNACULAR [L *vernaculus* 'home-born, domestic', from *verna*, a slave born in the master's house.] The language or idiom of a place, as against imperial or classical standards; by extension, local forms of practice — vernacular architecture, vernacular photography.

Ex. — “*The pamphlet’s force lay in its vernacular: argument conducted in the register of the street.*”

166. APPROPRIATION [L *appropriare* 'to make one's own' (*proprius*, 'own').] Taking cultural forms across lines of power. Richard Rogers (2006) distinguishes exchange, dominance, exploitation, and transculturation rather than treating all borrowing alike.

Ex. — “*The label’s ‘tribal’ print is appropriation in the exploitative sense: extraction without relation, credit, or return.*”

167. COSMOPOLITANISM [Gk *kosmopolites* 'citizen of the world' — Diogenes' self-description.] The ethic of obligation across borders. Kwame Anthony Appiah (*Cosmopolitanism*, 2006) defends a rooted version: universal concern joined to respect for particular attachments.

Ex. — “*The port city’s cosmopolitanism was practical before it was philosophical: trade required tables at which strangers could eat.*”

168. IDENTITY [L *idem* 'the same'.] Literally sameness — continuity of a self or group over time — though now equally used for what makes one distinct. Both senses matter analytically.

Ex. — “*Aadhaar fixes identity in the first sense — same body, same number; politics mobilizes it in the second.*”

SECTION VII.

BODIES, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTS.

169. EMBODIMENT [em- 'in' + OE *bodig*; Marcel Mauss analysed 'techniques of the body' (1935).] The body as the ground of social life — trained, classed, gendered: walking, sitting, and swimming are learned in cultural styles.

Ex. — “*Deference is embodied before it is believed: the lowered eyes preclude the doctrine.*”

170. MEDICALIZATION [L *medicus* 'physician'; named by Irving Zola (1972), developed by Peter Conrad.] The redefinition of human problems as medical ones — shyness becomes disorder, grief becomes symptom — expanding medicine's jurisdiction.

Ex. — “*Once restlessness was medicalized, the classroom acquired a pharmacy.*”

171. ILLNESS / DISEASE / SICKNESS [a triad standardized in medical anthropology (Leon Eisenberg, 1977; Arthur Kleinman, 1988).] Disease: the biological condition. Illness: the sufferer's experience of it. Sickness: the social role and its exemptions (Talcott Parsons's sick role, 1951).

Ex. — “*The scan found no disease; the illness, and the sickness absence, were nonetheless real.*”

172. DISABILITY & THE SOCIAL MODEL [L *dis-* + *habilis* 'able'; the social model articulated by UPIAS (1976) and Michael Oliver (1990).] The distinction between impairment — a bodily condition — and disability: the exclusion produced by environments built for some bodies only.

Ex. — “*The staircase, not the wheelchair, produces the disability: the social model in one image.*”

173. TRAUMA [Gk *trauma* 'wound'.] Psychic injury that outruns experience and returns unbidden (Cathy Caruth, 1996); now stretched, in loose usage, to cover ordinary distress.

Ex. — “*The testimony bears the marks of trauma: repetition, gaps, a story that arrives out of order.*”

N.B. — Reserve the clinical sense; 'a traumatic deadline' spends a word the analysis may later need.

174. THE ANTHROPOCENE [Gk *anthrōpos* 'human' + *kainos* 'new', on the model of geological epochs; proposed by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer (2000).] The proposed epoch in which human activity is the dominant geological force. Critics answer that 'humanity' hides the actual driver — hence Jason Moore's Capitalocene (2016).

Ex. — “*The Anthropocene’ indicts everyone equally; the emissions ledger does not.*”

175. SLOW VIOLENCE [Rob Nixon's term (*Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 2011).] Harm that unfolds gradually and out of sight — contamination, salinization, dispossession — and therefore struggles for narrative attention against the spectacular.

Ex. — “*The aquifer’s decline is slow violence: no explosion, no anniversary, no footage.*”

176. EXTRACTIVISM [L *extrahere* 'to drag out'; the critique developed in Latin America (Eduardo Gudynas; Maristella Svampa, 2015).] An economic model organized around removing nature for export — minerals, monocrops, and, by extension, data — concentrating gains elsewhere and harms locally.

Ex. — “*The district exports iron and imports its consequences: extractivism as a balance sheet.*”

177. MULTISPECIES & MORE-THAN-HUMAN [L *multus* + *species* 'appearance, kind'; multispecies ethnography named by Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich (2010).] Analysis that treats other species and materials as participants in social worlds rather than backdrop — Anna Tsing's matsutake supply chains (2015) are the exemplar.
Ex. — “*The dairy is a multispecies workplace; the cows keep schedules and resist them.*”

178. NATURE & CULTURE [L *natura* (*nasci*, 'to be born') / *cultura* again.] The modern divide assigning facts to nature and meanings to culture. Bruno Latour (1991) argued we have never actually kept them apart; Philippe Descola (2005) showed the divide is one cosmology among several.
Ex. — “*The flood report splits causes into 'natural' and 'man-made'; the embankment refuses the distinction.*”

179. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE [Robert Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie* (1990).] The demonstration that environmental harms track race, caste, and class — landfills and effluents sited where resistance is cheapest — and the movement demanding otherwise.
Ex. — “*The tannery cluster maps onto the settlement map: environmental injustice with coordinates.*”

180. RESILIENCE [L *resilire* 'to leap back'; entered systems ecology with C. S. Holling (1973).] A system's capacity to absorb disturbance and reorganize. In policy prose the word often migrates from description to demand — communities instructed to be resilient in lieu of being protected.
Ex. — “*The brochure praises the fishers' resilience; the budget assumes it.*”

181. SUSTAINABILITY [L *sustinere* 'to hold up'; the canonical definition from the Brundtland Report (*Our Common Future*, 1987).] Meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs — a formulation whose vagueness is both its diplomatic strength and its analytical weakness.
Ex. — “*Every prospectus is 'sustainable'; ask what is being sustained, for whom, and for how long.*”

182. THE COMMONS [L *communis* 'shared'.] Resources governed collectively — pastures, fisheries, spectrum, knowledge. Garrett Hardin's 'tragedy of the commons' (1968) predicted ruin without private or state control; Elinor Ostrom (*Governing the Commons*, 1990) documented communities governing commons successfully for centuries.
Ex. — “*The village tank was a managed commons for generations; its 'tragedy' arrived with its enclosure.*”

SECTION VIII.

LANGUAGE, TEXTS, AND SIGNS.

183. TEXT [L *textus* 'that which is woven' (*texere*, 'to weave' — hence *textile*).] In the expanded academic sense, anything that can be read for meaning: a novel, a sari, a city plan, a feed.
Ex. — “*Treat the application's onboarding screens as a text: who is its imagined reader?*”

184. NARRATIVE & TROPE [L *narrare* 'to relate', kin to *gnarus* 'knowing' (and, distantly, to *know*); Gk *tropos*, 'a turn'.] Narrative is the shaping of events into a story with order and point; a trope is a recurring figure or story-pattern.

Ex. — “*The startup's founding narrative — garage, struggle, triumph — is a trope older than the industry.*”

N.B. — The dismissive use ('just a narrative') forgets that data, too, must be emplotted.

185. CANON [Gk *kanōn* 'measuring rod, rule' (from *kanna*, 'reed').] The body of works a field treats as essential — and therefore a record of past power as much as past merit.
Ex. — “*Every syllabus is an argument about the canon, this lexicon included.*”

186. GENRE [Fr *genre*, from L *genus* — the same root as gender.] A recognized kind of text with shared conventions and expectations; Mikhail Bakhtin extended the idea to everyday 'speech genres' — the complaint, the toast, the viva answer.
Ex. — “*Reading the annual report as a genre reveals what it is obliged to say and forbidden to admit.*”

187. SIGN / SIGNIFIER / SIGNIFIED [L *signum* 'mark, token'; semiotics from Gk *semeion*, 'sign'.] Ferdinand de Saussure (1916): a sign joins a signifier (sound-image) to a signified (concept), and the bond is arbitrary — meaning lives in systems of difference. A **symbol** (Gk *symbolon*: a token snapped in two and rejoined as proof of identity) is a sign thickened by convention.
Ex. — “*The blue tick is a signifier whose signified — verified truth? paying subscriber? — keeps sliding.*”

188. CONNOTATION & DENOTATION [L *notare* 'to mark' (*con-* 'with' / *de-* 'down').] Denotation: what a sign literally designates. Connotation: the cultural meanings that ride along; Roland Barthes (*Mythologies*, 1957) analysed connotation as ideology's carrier.
Ex. — “*The word 'colony' denotes a settlement; in this city's property pages it connotes gates, lawns, and rank.*”

189. MYTH [Gk *mythos* 'speech, story'.] In analysis, not a falsehood but a culture's charged narrative; for Barthes, myth is speech that makes the historical look natural.
Ex. — “*The founder-in-a-garage story functions as myth: it naturalizes an economy of inherited advantage.*”
N.B. — Avoid the colloquial sense ('a myth' = an error) in academic prose, or mark it clearly.

190. METAPHOR & METONYMY [Gk *metapherein* 'to carry across' / *metonymia* 'change of name'.] Metaphor transfers meaning by resemblance; metonymy by contiguity (the Crown, the street, Silicon Valley). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argued that thought itself runs on metaphor.
Ex. — “*The market is nervous' — a metaphor performing a metonym's work of hiding the actors.*”

191. INTERTEXTUALITY [L *inter* + *texere*; Julia Kristeva's coinage (1966).] The condition of texts as woven from other texts — echo, citation, genre memory — so that meaning is relational rather than self-contained.
Ex. — “*The election poster is intertextual with the film it borrows its typeface from, and counts on the audience noticing.*”

192. RHETORIC [Gk *rhētorikē technē*, the orator's art (*rhētōr*, 'speaker').] The study and craft of persuasion — Aristotle's *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* — not a synonym for empty talk.

Ex. — “*The white paper's rhetoric works through ethos: forty citations before the first claim.*”

N.B. — ‘Mere rhetoric’ concedes rhetoric to one's opponents; analysis takes it seriously.

193. AESTHETIC [Gk *aisthēsis* ‘sense perception’; the philosophical sense from Alexander Baumgarten (1735).] Concerning perception and the judgement of form — historically about sensing before it was about beauty.

Ex. — “*The application's aesthetic — soft corners, calm blues — is an argument about trustworthiness conducted below the level of claims.*”

194. REGISTER & JARGON [L *regerere* ‘to record’; OFr *jarçon*, ‘the chattering of birds’.] Register: the variety of language keyed to situation — courtroom, canteen, semi-ar. Jargon: a trade's compressed register, efficient inside and excluding outside.

Ex. — “*The complaint failed at the hearing not on facts but on register.*”

195. TRANSLATION [L *translatus* ‘carried across’ — the same image as metaphor.] Carrying meaning between languages, always with remainder; the Italian saying *traduttore, traditore* (‘translator, traitor’) names the risk, not a verdict.

Ex. — “*The survey travelled into four languages; ‘household’ did not survive the journey intact.*”

196. REPRESENTATION [L *re-* ‘again’ + *praesentare* ‘to make present’.] Standing for something, in two registers English merges: depicting (a portrait, a dataset) and speaking for (a legislator, a spokesperson). Spivak notes that German keeps them apart: *Darstellung* and *Vertretung*.

Ex. — “*The map represents the district; the legislator represents it too — confusing the two is a political habit.*”

SECTION IX.

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY.

197. MEDIUM / MEDIA [L *medius* ‘middle’: that which stands between.] The material channel through which communication travels — and which shapes what can travel.

Ex. — “*The same argument lands differently in a seminar, a thread, and a reel; the medium is doing work.*”

N.B. — *Media* is a plural. ‘The media is’ has become common speech; in academic prose keep it plural or specify (‘the news media’).

198. DATA [L *datum* ‘that which is given’ (*dare*, ‘to give’).] Recorded observations — though nothing is simply given: every dataset is made, through choices about what to count and how (Lisa Gitelman, ed., ‘*Raw Data*’ Is an *Oxymoron*, 2013).

Ex. — “*Before analysing the data, ask who collected it, for what purpose, and what it silently omits.*”

N.B. — ‘Data is’ and ‘data are’ both circulate; choose one and be consistent.

199. DATAFICATION [L *datum* + *facere*.] Rendering life as machine-readable data — steps, moods, friendships; named by Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier (2013) and given critical edge by José van Dijck (2014).

Ex. — “*Attendance was datafied the day the register became an application; so was lateness, and its punishments.*”

200. FACT & ARTEFACT [L *factum* ‘a thing done or made’ (*facere*); *ars* + *factum*: ‘made by skill’ — spelled *artifact* in US usage.] Etymologically, facts are made — which is not to say faked: STS (Latour and Woolgar, 1979) studies the labour of instruments, replication, and review by which claims harden into facts. An artefact is any made thing; in methods usage, also a spurious effect produced by the instrument itself.

Ex. — “*The spike in reported crime was an artefact of the new complaints application, not a new crime wave.*”

201. TECHNOLOGY [Gk *technē* ‘art, craft, skill’ + *logos*: originally, discourse about the arts.] Not devices alone: the ensemble of artefacts, skills, and social arrangements that accomplish tasks.

Ex. — “*A queue is a technology; so is a land register; so is a large language model.*”

N.B. — Beware technological determinism — the assumption that tools dictate social outcomes by themselves.

202. ALGORITHM [from al-Khwārizmī, the ninth-century Baghdad mathematician, Latinized as *Algoritmi*; the spelling later drifted toward Gk *arithmos*, ‘number’.] A finite procedure for turning inputs into outputs — now shorthand for the computational systems that rank, filter, and decide.

Ex. — “*The algorithm decided*” conceals a chain of very human choices: objectives, training data, thresholds.”

203. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE [L *ars* ‘skill’ + *facere*; *intelligere* ‘to choose between’ (*inter* + *legere*).] Machine performance of tasks read as intelligent; the phrase was coined for the 1955 Dartmouth proposal (John McCarthy and colleagues). Karen Hao (*Empire of AI*, 2025) analyses the industry through the lens of empire: extraction of data, labour, and resources.

Ex. — “*Call it AI and the hiring tool sounds inevitable; call it a ranking formula and it invites audit.*”

204. CYBERNETICS [Gk *kybernētēs* ‘steersman’; Norbert Wiener's coinage (1948) — though Ampère had used *cybernétique* for the science of government a century earlier, and *kyberman* is, via L *gubernare*, the root of *govern*.] The study of systems steered by feedback: measurement, comparison, correction.

Ex. — “*Content moderation is applied cybernetics: measure, compare, correct, repeat.*”

205. AFFORDANCE [from *afford* (OE *gefordian*, ‘to further’); coined by the psychologist James Gibson (1979), adapted for design by Donald Norman (1988).] What an environment or object makes possible for a given user: a handle affords pulling; a share button affords amplification.

Ex. — “*Ask what the platform affords, to whom, and at what cost: the disappearing message affords deniability.*”

- 206. PLATFORM** [Fr *plate-forme* 'flat form'.] Infrastructure that hosts and governs the interactions of others. Tarleton Gillespie (2010) showed that the word itself does political work, promising openness while exercising control.
Ex. — “*The platform presents itself as a stage for speech and conducts itself as a landlord of it.*”
- 207. NETWORK SOCIETY** [OE *net* + *weorc*; Manuel Castells (*The Rise of the Network Society*, 1996).] A social order whose dominant functions are organized in information-technology networks — with hubs and switches as sites of power.
Ex. — “*The outage revealed the network society's geography: entire trades fell silent by node.*”
- 208. ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY** ['actant' borrowed from A. J. Greimas's semiotics; developed by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law.] An STS approach that traces how humans and nonhumans — scallops, standards, servers — are enrolled into networks that produce agency; an actant is anything that makes a difference in the network.
Ex. — “*In the outage post-mortem, the failed router is an actant with a speaking part.*”
N.B. — Michel Callon (1986) calls the enrolment of allies 'translation'; the allied idiom of assemblage renders Deleuze and Guattari's *agencement* — itself a much-debated act of translation.
- 209. BLACK BOX** [engineering shorthand for a device known only by its inputs and outputs.] In STS, a settled fact or working technology whose internal controversies have been closed from view; Bruno Latour (*Science in Action*, 1987) urged studying black boxes while they are still open.
Ex. — “*The credit score is a black box with a queue outside it.*”
- 210. INFRASTRUCTURE** [L *infra* 'below' + *structura*.] The substrate that makes activity possible — pipes, protocols, standards. Susan Leigh Star (1999) showed it is relational and invisible until breakdown; with James Griesemer (1989) she named **boundary objects**: things plastic enough to travel between communities yet stable enough to hold identity.
Ex. — “*Nobody cites the citation database; it is infrastructure — until the subscription lapses.*”
- 211. SOCIOTECHNICAL IMAGINARY** [L *socius* + Gk *technē*; Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim (2009).] Collectively held visions of desirable futures, animated by science and technology and embedded in institutions — the nuclear nation, the digital republic.
Ex. — “*Every smart-city bid narrates a sociotechnical imaginary before it lays a cable.*”
- 212. PANOPTICON & SURVEILLANCE** [Gk *pan* 'all' + *optikos* 'of sight'; Fr *sur* 'over' + *veiller*, from L *vigilare*, 'to keep watch'.] Jeremy Bentham's design (1791) for a prison whose inmates, permanently visible to an unseen watcher, come to discipline themselves; Foucault (1975) made it the diagram of modern surveillance.
Ex. — “*The workplace analytics dashboard requires no supervisor on the floor; continuous visibility performs the discipline.*”
N.B. — For the commercial mutation, see Shoshana Zuboff's surveillance capitalism (2019): behavioural data extracted as raw material for prediction.
- 213. ATTENTION ECONOMY** [L *attendere* 'to stretch toward'; Herbert Simon (1971) observed that information consumes attention, making attention the scarce resource.] The competition to capture and monetize attention — the political economy beneath the feed.
Ex. — “*In an attention economy, outrage is not a malfunction; it is a yield.*”
- 214. MEME** [coined by Richard Dawkins (1976) from Gk *mimema* 'that which is imitated', clipped to rhyme with gene.] A unit of cultural transmission; in internet usage, a remixable image-text form whose circulation Limor Shifman (2014) analyses as participatory culture.
Ex. — “*The policy died in committee and was reborn as a meme, which proved harder to table.*”
- 215. FILTER BUBBLE & ECHO CHAMBER** [Eli Pariser's coinage (2011); Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Joseph Cappella (2008).] Filter bubble: personalization narrowing what one is shown. Echo chamber: an environment that amplifies agreement and discredits outside sources. Empirical work complicates both; treat them as hypotheses about particular users, not facts about all.
Ex. — “*The study found less enclosure than expected: respondents encountered opposing content and dismissed it efficiently.*”
- 216. PARASOCIAL** [Gk *para* 'alongside'; Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl (1956).] The one-sided intimacy audiences form with media figures — now the engineered substrate of influencer economies.
Ex. — “*The apology video manages a parasocial relationship: repair work for a bond only one side can feel.*”
- 217. CONTEXT COLLAPSE** [Alice Marwick and danah boyd (2011).] The flattening of distinct audiences — family, employer, strangers — into one, which platform architecture performs by default and users manage through self-censorship or multiple accounts.
Ex. — “*The wedding photograph reached the recruiter: context collapse as a career event.*”
- 218. MISINFORMATION / DISINFORMATION / MALINFORMATION** [L *dis* 'apart', *male* 'badly', *informare*, the triad from Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan (2017).] False content shared without intent to harm; false content shared with intent; true content weaponized — leaks, doxxing. Intent and truth-value vary independently.
Ex. — “*The forwarded rumour was misinformation at the aunt's end and disinformation at its origin.*”

219. MODERATION [L. *moderari* 'to keep within measure'; Tarleton Gillespie (*Custodians of the Internet*, 2018).] The governance work platforms do on content — rules, queues, outsourced reviewers, automated filters — constitutive of platforms, not incidental to them.

Ex. — “Moderation is where the platform's stated values meet its labour costs.”

220. INFLUENCER [L. *influere* 'to flow in'; analysed by Crystal Abidin (*Internet Celebrity*, 2018).] A media producer whose product is calibrated intimacy at scale — attention converted to endorsement, endorsement to revenue.

Ex. — “The disclosure hashtag marks the boundary the genre exists to blur: friendship and advertisement.”

221. GENERATIVE AI [L. *generare* 'to beget'.] Systems producing text, images, or audio from statistical patterns in training data. Emily Bender and colleagues (“On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots”, 2021) cautioned against reading fluency as understanding; the industry term ‘hallucination’ for fluent error is itself contested as anthropomorphizing.

Ex. — “The chatbot's confident citation of a nonexistent case is not a lie; it is the system working as designed.”

222. DRONE [OE *drān*, the male honeybee; the aircraft sense, from the 1930s, is commonly traced to the ‘Queen Bee’ target plane.] A remotely piloted or autonomous aircraft; in social analysis, a probe into visibility, verticality, and control — Grégoire Chamayou's *Theory of the Drone* (2013) for the military case, with a growing scholarship on civilian drone cultures.

Ex. — “The village photographed by the survey drone acquires a legal existence its residents were never asked about.”

SECTION X.

SCIENCE, EXPERTISE, AND UNCERTAINTY.

223. EXPERTISE & LAY KNOWLEDGE [L. *expertus* 'tried, tested' (*experiri*, 'to try') — kin to experience and experiment.] Who may speak credibly about what. Brian Wynne's Cumbrian sheep farmers (1992) knew their fells better than the radiation modellers; Harry Collins and Robert Evans (2002) map varieties of expertise beyond the credentialed.

Ex. — “The hearing pitted certified expertise against experiential expertise, and only one had a microphone.”

224. CO-PRODUCTION [L. *com-* + *producere*; Sheila Jasanoff (2004).] The STS thesis that knowledge and social order are made together — how we know and how we govern shape one another.

Ex. — “The census and the caste order co-produced each other: counting made the categories governable, governing made them countable.”

N.B. — In media industries, ‘co-production’ means joint financing across borders; specify the sense in use.

225. BOUNDARY WORK [Thomas Gieryn's term (1983).] The rhetorical labour of drawing the line between science and non-science — demarcation as an achievement, redone in each controversy.

Ex. — “Calling the rival study ‘mere advocacy’ is boundary work, not measurement.”

226. TACIT KNOWLEDGE [L. *tacitus* 'silent'; Michael Polanyi (*The Tacit Dimension*, 1966).] Knowing-how that exceeds telling — riding a cycle, judging a kiln, reading a room; a standing limit on what manuals, and training data, can capture.

Ex. — “The retiring technician's tacit knowledge left with him; the procedures stayed, and sufficed for nothing.”

227. SCRIPT [L. *scribere* 'to write'; Madeleine Akrich (1992).] The user and world a designed object inscribes within itself — assumptions about bodies, skills, and settings; analysis ‘de-scribes’ them.

Ex. — “The scooter's flat footboard de-scribes its script: a rider in a sari was anticipated at the drawing board.”

228. INNOVATION & MAINTENANCE [L. *innovare* 'to renew' / *manu tenere* 'to hold in hand'.] The prestige economy of the new, set against the labour that keeps worlds working. Steven Jackson's ‘broken world thinking’ (2014) begins analysis from repair.

Ex. — “The city funds ribbon-cuttings annually and maintenance never: innovation as ideology.”

229. MODEL & SIMULATION [L. *modulus* 'small measure'; *simulare* 'to imitate'.] Simplified representations run to explore behaviour — mediators between theory and world (Mary Morgan and Margaret Morrison, 1999). George Box's dictum stands: models are wrong; some are useful.

Ex. — “The epidemic model's assumptions did the governing; the virus merely complied or declined.”

230. UNCERTAINTY & AGNOTOLOGY [L. *certus* 'settled', from *cernere* 'to sift'; agnotology from Gk *agnōsis* 'not knowing' (Robert Proctor and Londa Schiebinger, 2008).] Frank Knight (1921) separated risk — calculable — from uncertainty, which is not. Agnotology studies ignorance as made: doubt manufactured, records unkept, questions unfunded.

Ex. — “The industry did not deny the finding; it manufactured uncertainty around it, and bought a decade.”

SECTION XI.

SCHOOLS AND -ISMS AT A GLANCE.

231. FUNCTIONALISM [L. *functio* 'performance' (*fungi*, 'to perform').] Explaining institutions by the needs they serve for the social whole — Durkheim's inheritance, systematized by Talcott Parsons; Robert Merton (1949) distinguished manifest from latent functions.

Ex. — “A functionalist reads the wedding's expense as latent function: debt as alliance-glue.”

N.B. — Its standing critique: explaining by benefit slides easily into teleology.

232. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM [the name coined by Herbert Blumer (1937), from G. H. Mead's social psychology.] Society as accomplished in interaction: people act on meanings, meanings arise in exchange, and selves are built from others' responses.

Ex. — “For the interactionist, ‘the state’ at the counter is a clerk, a form, and a tone of voice.”

233. STRUCTURALISM & POST-STRUCTURALISM [L *struere* again.] Structuralism (Saussure; Lévi-Strauss) sought the underlying systems — binary oppositions — beneath culture's surface. Post-structuralism (Derrida, Foucault) kept the attention to systems but denied them stability: meaning defers, categories have histories, the analyst stands inside.

Ex. — “The kinship diagram is structuralist; the genealogy of ‘kinship’ as a concept is post-structuralist.”

234. POSTMODERNISM VS POSTMODERNITY [L *post* + *modernus*.] Postmodernity: a claimed historical condition. Postmodernism: the aesthetic and theoretical movement — Jean-François Lyotard's incredulity toward grand narratives (1979); Fredric Jameson (1991) read it as the cultural logic of late capitalism.

Ex. — “The mall's pastiche is postmodernism; the labour contract behind its counters belongs to a blunter period.”

N.B. — As an epithet (‘postmodern relativism’) the word usually marks the end of reading, not of argument.

235. CRITICAL THEORY [Gk *kritikos* again; Max Horkheimer's ‘Traditional and Critical Theory’ (1937), the Frankfurt School's charter.] Theory that aims not merely to describe society but to diagnose its unfreedom and aid its transformation — Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse; later Habermas.

Ex. — “The media chapter is critical theory in method: it asks whom the format serves, not only how it works.”

N.B. — Lower-case ‘critical’ study borrows the stance without the school; see critique.

236. PRAGMATISM [Gk *pragma* ‘deed, thing done’.] The American tradition — Peirce, James, Dewey, and Jane Addams, whose Hull House inquiries Mary Jo Deegan (1988) restored to sociology's record — testing ideas by their consequences in practice.

Ex. — “The pragmatist question for every concept in this lexicon: what difference does it make in use?”

SECTION XII.

THE CRAFT OF ARGUMENT.

237. ARGUMENT [L *arguere* ‘to make clear, to prove’.] A claim supported by reasons and evidence — not a quarrel. Stephen Toulmin (1958) anatomized it as claim, grounds, and warrant: the often unstated licence connecting the two.

Ex. — “The essay has opinions where its argument should be: claims without grounds, grounds without warrant.”

238. THESIS [Gk *thesis* ‘a placing’ (*tithenai*, ‘to set down’).] The central claim a piece of writing places before the reader and defends — specific enough to be opposed.

Ex. — “A topic is not a thesis; ‘social media and elections’ becomes one only when it says what about them.”

239. CLAIM & REPORTING VERBS [L *clamare* ‘to cry out’.] A claim is an assertion offered for acceptance; reporting verbs calibrate its strength — suggests, argues, shows, demonstrates ascend a ladder of commitment.

Ex. — “Write that the study suggests a link; ‘proves’ is a claim the design cannot carry.”

240. EVIDENCE [L *e-* ‘out’ + *videre* ‘to see’: what makes visible.] Material offered in support of a claim, its force depending on relevance, quality, and the warrant connecting it to the claim.

Ex. — “Three vivid anecdotes are evidence of possibility, not of prevalence.”

241. COUNTERARGUMENT & CONCESSION [L *contra* ‘against’; *concedere* ‘to yield’.] Anticipating the strongest case against one's claim, and granting what is true in it; conceding accurately is a form of strength.

Ex. — “The essay improves the moment it concedes the rival explanation and shows what it still cannot explain.”

242. FALLACY [L *fallere* ‘to deceive’.] A pattern of defective reasoning: ad hominem (attacking the arguer), the straw man (refuting a weakened copy), non sequitur (a conclusion unmoored from premises), post hoc (after, therefore because).

Ex. — “Naming the fallacy is the beginning of the reply, not the whole of it.”

243. ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS [Gk *analyein* ‘to loosen apart’ / *synthēnai* ‘to put together’.] Analysis takes a phenomenon apart to show how it works; synthesis assembles parts — often from many sources — into a new whole. ‘Too descriptive’ usually means: parts listed, workings unexamined.

Ex. — “The literature review synthesizes; the case chapter analyses; the conclusion must do both.”

244. ABSTRACT [L *abstrahere* ‘to drag away’.] As an adjective, removed from particulars; as a noun, the compressed statement of a paper's question, method, findings, and stake.

Ex. — “Write the abstract last and it will confess what the paper actually argues.”

245. RIGOUR [L *rigor* ‘stiffness’ (*rigere*, ‘to be stiff’) — as in *rigor mortis*; US spelling *rigor*.] Care and exactness in method and reasoning: stated procedures, checked inferences, acknowledged limits — not difficulty for its own sake.

Ex. — “The paper's rigour shows in its appendix: every coding decision is recorded and reversible.”

246. NUANCE [Fr *nuance* ‘shade of colour’, from *nue* ‘cloud’.] A fine gradation of meaning; to nuance a claim is to specify where it holds, how strongly, and for whom.

Ex. — “The revision added nuance where the draft had volume: scope conditions, not adjectives.”

247. FRAMEWORK & LENS [OE *framian* ‘to be of use’; L *lens* ‘lentil’, for the seed's shape.] A framework organizes inquiry — its concepts, assumptions, and questions. A lens is the lighter metaphor: a way of looking. Name yours, and keep the metaphors consistent.

Ex. — “Through a Bourdieusian lens, the admissions essay is a display of inherited capital.”

- 248. HEDGING & QUALIFICATION** [OE *hecg*, a boundary shrub; L *qualis*.] Calibrating claims to evidence — may, tends to, in this sample: the metadiscourse by which academic writing signals how much it is claiming.
Ex. — “*Hedging is honesty, not weakness; the unhedged sentence promised more than the data delivered.*”
- 249. SIGNPOSTING** [plain English.] Explicit guidance to the reader — this section argues; having shown X, I turn to Y — the connective tissue that makes structure audible.
Ex. — “*The chapter’s signposting lets a tired examiner navigate it at midnight, which is when examiners read.*”
- 250. THE LITERATURE** [L *littera* ‘letter’.] The accumulated published work on a question; a literature review positions a study within it — as conversation, not inventory.
Ex. — “*The review should end at the gap the study fills; the literature is a map, not a museum tour.*”
- 251. PARAPHRASE & QUOTATION** [Gk *para* ‘alongside’ + *phrazein* ‘to tell’; L *quotare* ‘to number’.] Restating a source in one’s own words versus reproducing its words exactly — both cited. Paraphrase demonstrates understanding; quotation preserves wording that matters as wording.
Ex. — “*Quote the definition; paraphrase the findings; cite both.*”

SECTION XIII.

THE WORKING VERBS.

- 252. PROBLEMATIZE** [Gk *problēma* ‘a thing thrown forward, an obstacle’ (*pro* + *ballein*, ‘to throw’).] To convert the taken-for-granted into a question: how did this come to seem normal, natural, necessary?
Ex. — “*The essay problematizes ‘screen time’: who decided attention should be metered in minutes?*”
- 253. INTERROGATE** [L *inter* ‘between’ + *rogare* ‘to ask’.] In academic prose, to question rigorously and systematically.
Ex. — “*The chapter interrogates the category of ‘the user’.*”
N.B. — The academic sense carries no coercive implication. Use in moderation; vary with *examine*, *probe*, *scrutinize*.
- 254. HISTORICIZE** [Gk *historia* ‘inquiry’ — the word Herodotus used.] To restore a phenomenon to its history: showing that what presents itself as timeless was assembled, dated, and could have been otherwise.
Ex. — “*Historicize the ‘traditional’ wedding and much of it proves younger than the grandparents attending it.*”
- 255. THEORIZE** [Gk *theōrein* ‘to look at’.] To move from a case to the concepts that make it a case of something — naming mechanisms, relations, conditions.
Ex. — “*The paper describes the queue vividly but never theorizes it: what is the queue a case of?*”
- 256. CONTEXTUALIZE / SITUATE** [L *contexere* ‘to weave together’ (kin to *text*); *situs* ‘position’.] To place a claim, text, or practice within the circumstances that give it meaning.
Ex. — “*Situate the meme: its joke depends on an examination calendar and a housing market.*”
- 257. UNPACK** [plain English; no classical pedigree.] To make explicit the assumptions compressed inside a term or claim.
Ex. — “*‘Smart city’ needs unpacking: smart for whom, measured how, governed by whom?*”
N.B. — A workshop favourite. Use it — and then actually do it.
- 258. COMPLICATE** [L *com-* + *plicare* ‘to fold together’ — the opposite of *explicate*, ‘to unfold’.] To show that a tidy account conceals folds: exceptions, mechanisms, competing forces. Earned complexity, not decoration.
Ex. — “*The interviews complicate the resistance narrative: half the ‘resisters’ sought better inclusion, not exit.*”
- 259. NATURALIZE / NORMALIZE** [L *natura* (*nasci*, ‘to be born’); *norma*, the carpenter’s square again.] To make the constructed appear natural, or the contingent appear standard — usually the work of discourse, and undone by analysis.
Ex. — “*Default settings quietly normalize one way of being a user.*”
- 260. DECENTRE** [*de-* + Gk *kentron* ‘centre’.] To displace an assumed centre — the West, the state, the human — so that analysis no longer treats it as the default vantage.
Ex. — “*Decentring the capital, the study begins from the district office where policy actually lands.*”
- 261. TROUBLE** [L *turbare* ‘to stir up’, via OFr *trubler*.] As a verb of analysis — after Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) and Donna Haraway’s *Staying with the Trouble* (2016) — to unsettle a category productively rather than resolve it.
Ex. — “*The archive troubles the official chronology without yet replacing it.*”
- 262. READ & CLOSE READING** [OE *rædan* ‘to advise, to interpret’.] In the humanities, to read is to interpret, and ‘a reading’ is a defended interpretation; close reading — disciplined attention to a text’s exact words and form — was institutionalized by the New Critics (I. A. Richards, 1929).
Ex. — “*Her reading of the privacy policy is a close reading: the argument turns on one modal verb.*”
- 263. DEPLOY & MOBILIZE** [L *displicare* ‘to unfold’; *mobilis* ‘movable’.] To put a concept or resource to strategic work — with a faint military accent worth noticing in one’s own prose.
Ex. — “*The report deploys ‘resilience’ wherever ‘budget cut’ would be accurate.*”
- 264. DECONSTRUCT** [*de-* + L *construere* ‘to build together’; Jacques Derrida’s *déconstruction* (1967).] A precise reading practice showing how a text depends on hierarchies — speech/writing, reason/emotion, West/East — that its own logic cannot sustain.
Ex. — “*Deconstructing the report means showing how its ‘hard data’ quietly leans on the ‘anecdote’ it dismisses.*”
N.B. — Not a synonym for *analyse*, *debunk*, or *take apart*. Reserve it for the Derridean move — or avoid it.

SECTION XIV.
EASILY CONFUSED, FRE-
QUENTLY MISUSED.

- 265. AFFECT / EFFECT** [L *afficere* 'to act upon' / *efficere* 'to bring about' — both children of *facere*.] Affect is usually the verb (to influence), effect the noun (a result). But *to effect* means to bring about; and *affect* as a noun — in psychology and affect theory, via Spinoza's *affectus* — names felt intensity and emotion.
Ex. — “*Design affects mood; the effect is measurable; affect itself is what the endless scroll trades in.*”
- 266. INFER / IMPLY** [L *inferre* 'to carry in' / *implicare* 'to fold in'.] A speaker or text implies (suggests without stating); a listener or reader infers (draws the conclusion out).
Ex. — “*The minister implied the data was flawed; journalists inferred the report would be shelved.*”
- 267. DISINTERESTED / UNINTERESTED** [L *inter esse* 'to be between, to matter'.] Disinterested: impartial, without a stake. Uninterested: lacking interest.
Ex. — “*Peer review requires disinterested readers — reviewers without a stake in the result, not reviewers without interest in it.*”
- 268. DISCREET / DISCRETE** [both from L *discretus* 'separated' — one word, two spellings, two meanings.] Discreet: tactfully unobtrusive. Discrete: separate, distinct.
Ex. — “*The dataset has discrete categories; the fieldworker was discreet about who supplied them.*”
- 269. PRINCIPLE / PRINCIPAL** [L *principium* 'beginning, foundation' / *principalis* 'first in rank'.] A principle is a rule or foundation; principal is the chief thing or person — and a loan's original sum.
Ex. — “*The principal finding rests on a methodological principle: never trust a single source.*”
- 270. COMPRISE / COMPOSE** [L *comprehendere* 'to grasp together' / *componere* 'to put together'.] The whole comprises the parts; the parts compose the whole. 'Com-*rised of*' is widespread but still flagged in formal prose.
Ex. — “*The sample comprises three villages; three villages compose the sample.*”
- 271. AMBIGUOUS / AMBIVALENT** [L *ambi-* 'both ways' + *agere* 'to drive' / *valere* 'to be strong'.] Ambiguous describes a text or situation open to multiple readings; ambivalent describes a person pulled by contrary feelings.
Ex. — “*The policy is ambiguous; the officials enforcing it are ambivalent.*”
- 272. ALLUDE / ELUDE / ELIDE** [L *ludere* 'to play' (*ad-* 'to-ward' / *e-* 'away'); *elidere* 'to strike out' (*laedere*).] Allude: refer indirectly. Elude: escape. Elide: omit or merge — not a learned synonym for 'avoid'.
Ex. — “*The minister alluded to the report, eluded its questions, and elided its findings from the summary.*”
- 273. HISTORIC / HISTORICAL** [Gk *historia* 'inquiry'.] Historic: momentous in history. Historical: pertaining to history. A historical document is old; a historic one changed something.
Ex. — “*The archive is full of historical pamphlets; only one of them proved historic.*”
- 274. ECONOMIC / ECONOMICAL** [Gk *oikonomia* 'household management' (*oikos* 'house' + *nemein* 'to manage').] Economic: pertaining to the economy. Economical: thrifty, efficient.
Ex. — “*The policy's economic effects were large; its prose, mercifully, economical.*”
- 275. EMINENT / IMMINENT / IMMANENT** [L *eminere* 'to stand out' / *imminere* 'to overhang' / *immanere* 'to dwell within'.] Eminent: distinguished. Imminent: about to happen. Immanent: internal to a thing — in theory, the counterpart of transcendent.
Ex. — “*The eminent theorist argued that critique must be immanent; the deadline, meanwhile, was imminent.*”
- 276. FLOUT / FLAUNT** [both of uncertain sixteenth-century origin.] Flout: to defy openly. Flaunt: to display ostentatiously. One flouts rules and flaunts wealth; the crossover is common and always noticed.
Ex. — “*The convoy flaunted the office and flouted the traffic code in a single manoeuvre.*”
- 277. MILITATE / MITIGATE** [L *militare* 'to serve as a soldier' / *mitigare* 'to soften'.] Evidence militates against a conclusion — weighs against it; measures mitigate a harm — soften it. 'Mitigate against' is the standing error.
Ex. — “*The findings militate against the policy; the amendments merely mitigate it.*”
- 278. DE FACTO / DE JURE** [L 'from the fact' / 'from the law'.] What holds in practice versus what holds by law — segregation, standards, and heads of state come in both varieties.
Ex. — “*The institution's English requirement is de facto: no by-law states it, and every gatekeeper applies it.*”
- 279. SUI GENERIS** [L 'of its own kind'.] Belonging to no larger class. Durkheim used it to insist that society is a reality *sui generis*, irreducible to psychology.
Ex. — “*The tribunal is sui generis: neither court nor committee, and citable as precedent by neither.*”
- 280. CRITERION & PHENOMENON** [Gk *kritērion* 'a means of judging'; *phainomenon* 'that which appears'.] Greek singulars with Greek plurals: one criterion, several criteria; one phenomenon, many phenomena. Compare *datum/data* (see *data*).
Ex. — “*The committee applied three criteria; the report treats each phenomenon separately.*”
- 281. FEWER / LESS** [OE *fēawe* / *læssa*.] Fewer for countable nouns, less for quantities: fewer respondents, less time. Likewise number of cases, amount of funding.
Ex. — “*Fewer interviews yielded less data but no fewer insights.*”
- 282. DICHOTOMY & BINARY** [Gk *dicha* 'in two' + *temnein* 'to cut'; L *bini* 'two by two'.] A division into two exclusive parts. A false dichotomy presents two options where more exist; much critical analysis consists in showing a binary to be constructed.
Ex. — “*The tradition/modernity dichotomy dissolves inside any actual household.*”

283. MOOT [OE *mōt* 'assembly, meeting' — hence the moot court, where questions are argued for practice.] In British usage, debatable; in American usage, of no practical consequence. State which sense is meant, or choose another word.

Ex. — “*Whether the clause was ever enforceable is now moot in both senses: arguable, and irrelevant.*”

284. ENORMITY [L *enormis* 'out of the rule' (*e* + *norma* — the carpenter's square once more).] Traditionally, monstrous wickedness rather than mere size; 'the enormity of the stadium' invites misreading.

Ex. — “*The tribunal's report conveys the enormity of the crime, not merely its scale.*”

285. BEG THE QUESTION [a mistranslation chain: Aristotle's phrase → L *petitio principii*, 'laying claim to the starting point'.] To assume in the premise the very conclusion one claims to prove. Not 'to raise the question'.

Ex. — “*Banning the application is right because such applications should be banned*” *begs the question.*”

N.B. — If you mean 'prompts the question', write exactly that.

286. PROBLEMATIC [Gk *problēma* again; the noun via Fr *problématique* (Althusser).] As an adjective: raising genuine analytical or ethical difficulty. As a noun: the underlying framework of questions organizing a body of thought.

Ex. — “*State the paper's problematic — the question behind its questions.*”

N.B. — The colloquial *problematic* ('vaguely objectionable') is a different tool. In academic prose, say what the problem actually is.

287. I.E. / E.G. [L *id est* 'that is' / *exempli gratia* 'for the sake of an example'.] *i.e.* restates or specifies; *e.g.* offers examples.

Ex. — “*Cite platform scholars, e.g., Gillespie; the field's core question, i.e., how platforms govern, stays constant.*”

N.B. — Both usually take a following comma. The box below covers their Latin relatives.

288. INFLATED DICTION [L *inflare* 'to blow into'.] Word-swelling that adds syllables without meaning: utilize for use, impactful for effective, leverage (as a verb) for use. Formal register is achieved by precision, not inflation.

Ex. — “*The draft utilized 'leverage' four times; the revision used 'use', and gained authority.*”

THE COMMON LATIN ABBREVIATIONS.

et al. (*et alii*) 'and others' — the full stop follows *al.*, never *et*
 · **cf.** (*confer*) 'compare', not 'see' · **sic** 'thus' — the quoted error is the source's, not yours · **ibid.** (*ibidem*) 'in the same place' · **ca.** or **c.** (*circa*) 'around' · **viz.** (*videlicet*) 'namely' · **NB** (*nota bene*) 'note well' · **passim** 'here and there throughout'.

SECTION XV.

WORDS ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY.

289. THE ACADEMY [Gk *Akademeia*, the grove outside Athens — named for the hero Akademos — where Plato taught.] The institution of higher learning collectively; 'academic' descends from a suburban olive grove.

Ex. — “*The academy's rituals — gowns, processions, Latin — are younger and stranger than they present themselves.*”

290. PEDAGOGY [Gk *pais*, *paidos* 'child' + *agein* 'to lead'; the *paidagōgos* was the enslaved attendant who walked children to school.] The theory and craft of teaching.

Ex. — “*Her pedagogy treats the classroom as a research site.*”

N.B. — The etymology is a standing reminder of who has done education's unglamorous labour.

291. CURRICULUM [L *currere* 'to run': a race-course.] The designed course of study. A *curriculum vitae* is, literally, the course of a life.

Ex. — “*Decolonizing the curriculum means redesigning the course of study itself, not appending a concluding week.*”

292. SYLLABUS [apparently born of a Renaissance misprint: Gk *sittybas* ('parchment labels') in a manuscript of Cicero was misread, and *syllabus* entered Latin with a life of its own.] The document mapping a course's readings and obligations.

Ex. — “*Read the syllabus as a genre: part contract, part manifesto.*”

293. SEMINAR & SEMINAL [L *seminarium* 'seed-plot' (*semen*, 'seed').] A seminar is where ideas are germinated by discussion; seminal describes a work that seeded a field.

Ex. — “*The seminar's best moments are unplanned; so were most of the seminal papers under discussion.*”

N.B. — Given the gendered root, many writers now prefer *foundational*, *germinal*, or *field-defining*. All do the work.

294. COLLOQUIUM & SYMPOSIUM [L *com-* + *loqui* 'to speak together'; Gk *syn-* + *pinein* 'to drink together' — Plato's *Symposium* records one such gathering.] Two names for scholarly gatherings — one etymologically sober, one convivial.

Ex. — “*The colloquium ran on questions; the symposium, true to its roots, ran on into dinner.*”

295. DISSERTATION & MONOGRAPH [L *disserere* 'to set in order in speech' (*serere*, 'to join, link'); Gk *monos* 'single' + *graphein*.] The dissertation is the extended original study submitted for a degree; the monograph, a book-length study of one subject — often the dissertation, rebuilt.

Ex. — “*The examiners' first question was the monograph question: what will the dissertation become?*”

296. VIVA VOCE [L, 'with the living voice'.] The oral examination of a thesis — the viva — in which the candidate defends the work in person.

Ex. — “*The viva turned on chapter four; the living voice had to supply what the footnote had not.*”

297. PEER REVIEW [L *par* 'equal'.] Evaluation of scholarship by qualified equals before publication; its practices formalized gradually and became routine only in the mid-twentieth century — a historical institution, not a timeless one.

Ex. — “*Peer review is the discipline arguing with itself in slow motion.*”

298. SABBATICAL [Gk *sabbatikos*, from Hebrew *shabbāt* 'rest' — by way of the biblical seventh year in which fields lay fallow.] Periodic release from teaching for research; the fallow that precedes a crop.

Ex. — “*The book's acknowledgements record a sabbatical: institutional time, converted into pages.*”

299. ALUMNUS / ALUMNI [L. *alumnus* 'nursling, foster child' (*alere*, 'to nourish').] A graduate — literally one the institution nourished. Plural alumni; feminine alumna, plural alumnae. 'Alumni' is not singular.

Ex. — “*One alumnus funded the archive; the alumni association claimed the credit.*”

300. PLAGIARISM [L. *plagiarius* 'kidnapper' (*plaga*, 'a snare, a net'); the poet Martial used it of a man who stole his verses.] Presenting others' words or ideas as one's own: word-theft as person-theft.

Ex. — “*Citation is the opposite of plagiarism — it returns the kidnapped words to their kin.*”

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Vocabulary is a commons; commons are maintained by argument. Corrections are welcome.

F I N I S .