



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Department of Sociology

Course Syllabus
Classical Sociological Theory
Fall 2022

Teacher
Reza Azarian
reza.azarian@soc.uu.se

Classical Sociological Theory

A Doctoral Course for PhD Candidates

Fall Term 2022, Credits: 7.5 ECTS

Course Description

The course will examine the classical foundations of sociology. It will focus on the works of the most influential and original contributors (Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and George Simmel) who have had an enduring and decisive impact on the development of modern sociological thought and research. Strong emphasis is placed on the reading, analyzing and discussing major original texts in order to arrive at a deeper and more advanced understanding of how these early sociological pioneers developed and crafted distinct lenses through which to view social reality, its functioning and its transformation.

The course is mandatory for the research program in sociology, offered by the Department of Sociology, Uppsala University but it is open to doctoral candidates in other disciplines.

The course is given on a half-time basis during the first half of the fall term, stretching over a period of nine weeks (2/9 – 3/11). The language of instruction is English.

Learning outcomes

Upon accomplishment of the course, the participants are expected to

- have sufficient knowledge about the origin of sociology and the specific social and intellectual context in which sociology was born as an academic discipline;
- have advanced understanding of the meaning of the central concepts and theories in classical sociological theory;
- show the ability to unpack analytically the classical sociological perspectives by identifying the basic tenets, tacit assumptions, key argumentation structures, and main implications of each perspective as well as the ability to discern important similarities and differences among them;
- demonstrate the ability to assess critically classical sociological theories in terms of their merits and limitations;
- have knowledge about the ways in which the classical heritage has shaped and continues to influence modern sociological debate and research.

The Design of the Course

Teaching takes the form of a series of mandatory seminars. At each seminar, specific parts of relevant literature will be the subject of a detailed discussion to which all participants are expected to contribute actively. Prior to each seminar, participants are expected to read the assigned texts carefully. In order to help students prepare for the in-class discussions and to structure the treatment of the assigned literature, a few broad questions will be proposed by the teacher in advance for each seminar. Based on these questions, the participants are expected to write a short text-reflection (ca one page) to be submitted at

the seminar. Attendance and active participation in seminars are essential and absence will lead to extra written assignments. However, the students who miss more than two sessions will not be able to continue the course and will have to take it the next time it is given.

Schedule

Date	Time	Place	Form
Friday 2/9	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Introduction
Friday 9/9	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 1
Friday 16/9	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 2
Friday 23/9	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 3
Friday 30/9	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 4
Friday 7/10	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 4
Friday 14/10	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 6
Friday 21/10	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 7
Friday 28/10	10:15-12:00	Zetterberg Room	Seminar 8
Wednesday 2/11	Course Paper to be handed in	Zetterberg Room	

Friday 2/9, 10:15-12:00

Lecture 1: Introduction of the course

Friday 9/9, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 1: Some Early Thinkers

Literature:

Comte, Auguste (1875). Chapter One. In *The System of Positive Polity: Social Statistics or the Abstract Theory of Human Order*.

<https://archive.org/stream/systemofpositive02comt#page/n11/mode/2up>

Spencer, Herbert (1860). The Social Organism. In *The Man Versus the State: With Six Essays on Government, Society, and Freedom*.

[file:///C:/Users/rezaz527/Work%20Folders/Desktop/PHD%20Classic%20Sociology/Social%20Organism%20\(Spencer\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/rezaz527/Work%20Folders/Desktop/PHD%20Classic%20Sociology/Social%20Organism%20(Spencer).pdf)

Tönnies, Ferdinand (1887). Part One: General Statement of the Main Concepts. In *Community and Society*.

https://books.google.se/books?hl=sv&lr=&id=sKcITieRERYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP7&dq=t%C3%B6nnies+A+general+classification+of+key+ideas&ots=88D5a7w29w&sig=6JjWc03TF4EcE2RKR0pK6tExMBU&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=t%C3%B6nnies%20A%20general%20classification%20of%20key%20ideas&f=false

Friday 16/9, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 2: Karl Marx

Literature:

Marx, Karl (1857–61). *Grundrisse*.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/grundrisse.pdf>

Marx, Karl (1846). *The German Ideology*.

https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf

Friday 23/9, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 3: Max Weber

Literature:

Weber, Max (1922). Chapter 1 (Basic Sociological Terms), Chapter 3 (The Types of Legitimate Domination) and Chapter 4 (Status Groups and Classes Chapters). In *Economy and Society* Volume 1, Part 1.

Weber, Max (1905). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Friday 30/9, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 4: Emile Durkheim

Literature:

Durkheim, Emile (1893). *The Division of Labor in Society*.

Durkheim, Emile (1895). *The Rules of Sociological Method*.

Friday 7/10, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 5: George Simmel

Literature:

Simmel, George (1971). *On Individual and Social Forms*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,

Simmel, George (1955) A contribution to the sociology of religion. *American Journal of Sociology*, 60(S6), 1–18.

Friday 14/10, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 6: Classic American Sociology

Literature:

Ellwood, Charles, E. (1909). The Origin of Society. *American Journal of Sociology* 15(3): 394–404.

<file:///C:/Users/rezaz527/Work%20Folders/Desktop/PHD%20Classic%20Sociology/Origin%20of%20Human%20Society.pdf>

Cooley, Charles, H. (1922). *Human Nature and the Social Order*.

https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Cooley/Cooley_1902/Cooley_1902toc.html

Mead, George H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*.

http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Mead/pubs2/mindself/Mead_1934_toc.html

Friday 21/10, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 7: Some of the Forgotten Ones

Literature

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1898). The Study of the Negro Problems. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11: 1–23.

Mondo Lengermann, P. and Niebrugge, G. (1998). *The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory 1830-1930*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Perkins Gilman, C. (1908). A Suggestion on the Negro Problem. *American Journal of Sociology* 14(1): 78–85.

Thomas, W. I. (1912). Race Psychology: Standpoint and Questionnaire, with Particular Reference to the Immigrant and the Negro. *American Journal of Sociology* 17(6): 725–775.

Friday 28/10, 10:15-12:00

Seminar 8: Reflections on the nature of sociology

Literature:

Collins, Randal. (1998). The sociological eye and its blinders. *Contemporary Sociology* 27(1): 2–7.

Giddings, Franklin H. (1891). Sociology as a university study. *Political Science Quarterly*, 6(4): 635–655.

Weber, Max (1918). Science as a vocation.

https://web.archive.org/web/20000708094747/http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/lecture/science_frame.html

Tilly, Charles (2003). Why read the classics.

Examination

The course is examined partly through the doctoral candidates' preparation for and active participation in the seminars, partly through an individually written final paper. The purpose of the final course paper is to give you an opportunity to delve into and try your hands at analyzing a few key theoretical issues that from the beginning have been central to sociology. More specifically, in order to write the final paper, you need to choose three main concepts and/or notions that have had an enduring significance for the discipline of sociology, for the evolution of different schools of thought and/or research traditions as well as for the structure of the persistent inter-disciplinary debates. Examples of such key concepts/notions are social class, social institution, social structure, social change/evolution or issues such as social conflict, cohesion/integration, social order and the actor-structure relation. After having chosen the concepts/notion, you need to present, compare and discuss different views, conceptualizations and treatments that these concepts/notions have received in the literature of the course.

The course paper should be evenly dispositioned, and the appropriate length is about 2000 words per concept/notion, summing up to a maximum of 6000 in total. The course paper that should be written in English and in a Word-file, and must be uploaded in Studium no later than Wednesday, November 2nd, 2022.

The criteria crucial to the assessment and grading the final course paper are as follows:

- The extent to which the paper engage the course literature;
- The depth of the understanding of the literature as demonstrated through the paper;
- The degree to which the paper is argumentative (rather than merely descriptive);
- The quality of the argumentations assessed by the support provided (in form of paginated references) as the analytical precision and the lucidity of the structure of the paper;
- The formal aspects of the paper (academic language, correct references list of literature, etc.).

Sincerely
Reza Azarian