

Introduction

This course seeks to explore, first, the relationship between the emergence of 'modernity' and the invention of 'social science,' paying attention especially to Weber, Marx and Durkheim. These thinkers created some of social sciences most memorable and influential narratives. We will, second, explore several 20th century traditions of sociological thought, both in Europe and in the United States, which have shaped how we see our world today.

Objectives

This course aims to (a) introduce students to central classical and contemporary works, theories, and traditions in social theory, as well as (b) to examine, compare, and contrast the ways different classical and contemporary theorists approach several core problems in the discipline, including the nature of society, the individual-society relation, culture, and social structure. We will focus on theory construction and evaluation. Theoretical solutions to substantive questions imply specific assumptions on human actions and knowledge. Each of classical authors adopted a different perspective for theory development. We will study and compare those diverse ways of theorizing.

Learning outcomes

1. To understand the basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, such that students will be able to define, give examples, show interrelationships, and demonstrate the relevance of the following:

- *Culture*
- *Social change*
- *Socialization*
- *Stratification*
- *Social structure*
- *Institutions*
- *Social differentiation*

COURSE OUTLINE

2. To describe the role of culture and social structure in shaping individual lives and be able to provide and recognize examples of this process

3. To read literary and non-quantitative accounts of human life in order to draw conclusions regarding their sociological significance and their value as evidence in sociological inquiries.

4. To understand the role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to:

- Define theory and describe and illustrate its role in building sociological knowledge.
- Compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations in reference to social phenomena.
- Understand and show how theories reflect the historical and social contexts of the times and cultures in which they were developed.

5. To employ broad sociological theory (what Mills calls "usable sociological traditions") to provide an original analysis of current circumstances in some sphere of society.

CompetenciesGeneral

Conduct a critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas with the objective to produce general principles applicable to business situations.

Profound understanding and appreciation of the importance of the human factor within an organizational framework.

Specific

Understand the concepts of social and human sciences relevant and necessary to carry out research projects of international level in the area of business management.

Ability to articulate research questions that could extend our understanding of the field, and design a research program to answer them.

Content

This course is divided into three broad areas: (a) Classical sociologists, (b) 20th century sociology, and (c) current trends

Methodology

All students are expected to attend all meetings having read the material and prepared to discuss the readings. This course is a seminar, and you should participate actively. The intellectual returns to this course rely heavily on student participation. It is not a lecture course. Unlike undergraduate courses, where the purpose is (often) to master a definitive set of "facts," the purpose of this course is to develop your independent thinking skills. As such, I will lecture as little as possible. Instead, I intend to moderate an active discussion centred on key questions from the readings. This format mimics in miniature what you will be doing as academics, actively engaging in debate with colleagues. I expect discussion to be professional and polite (no personal attacks, please), but engaged. Do not shy away from points. Do push arguments. Do not accept two logically inconsistent points as "equally valid perspectives." Do seek to understand the basic assumptions that drive different conclusions. We seek to develop a deeper understanding of social theory by confronting alternative positions. For this format to work, you must be active participants.

Each week all students will prepare at least one question for discussion, based on the readings. These questions will be circulated in advance to both the professor and to that week's discussion leaders, who will use those questions to plan their presentations.

Meeting leaders. Each week, two people will have primary responsibility for outlining, summarizing and generating discussion for the week's reading. Discussion leaders will be rotated, so everyone will play this role as many times as possible. I will let you assign discussion leaders for each week. Please let me know in advance who will be leading.

Evaluation

Briefs. In addition to discussion leadership, both meeting leaders will be required to write a single "brief" – that is, I will expect one document by two authors – , i.e., a short paper summarizing and critiquing the readings for a given week. Briefs should be turned in on the day we cover the material. The brief should provide:

1. An explanation of a particular problem that the author is posing / attacking
2. An outline of the main themes of the author's argument on that particular problem.
3. Areas of contention with either the argument or the evidence the author presents.

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Exam. During the last meeting students will be required to write another brief that will be considered as a comprehensive exam. Details will be provided later in the course.

Grade breakdown

Briefs and exam: 50 %

Class participation: 50 % (based on being active in class)

Course outline and bibliography

General references

CST I: Calhoun, C., Gerteis, J., Moody, J., Pfaff, S., Schmidt, K., and Virk, I., 2001, Classical Social Theory, Blackwell Publishers.

CST II: Calhoun, C., Gerteis, J., Moody, J., Pfaff, S., and Virk, I., 2002, Contemporary Social Theory Blackwell Publishers.

Other useful references:

Alexander, J. C. 1987. Twenty Lectures: Sociological Theory since World War II. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ritzer, G., 2000, Sociological Theory, McGraw-Hill, New York, 5th ed.

Meeting #1. Introductory session (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).

Introduction to the course. What is the goal of social theory? Why read the classics? What are the criteria to evaluate theory?

Readings:

Introduction: The Sociological Theory Reader in CST I, pp. 1-15

J. C. Alexander, 1987, "What is theory?," in *Twenty Lectures: Sociological Theory since World War II*, Columbia University Press, pp. 1-22

J. C. Alexander, 1998, "The Centrality of the Classics, in Giddens, A. & Turner, J.H., *Social Theory Today*, Stanford University Press, pp. 11-32.

David Wagner and Joseph Berger, 1985. "Do Sociological Theories Grow? *American Journal of Sociology* 90: 697-728.

Charles Camic and Neil Gross, 1998. "Contemporary Developments in Sociological Theory: Current Projects and Conditions of Possibility." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 453-76.

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

Meeting #2. Marx (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).

What are the essential aspects of human interaction? How does economic production affect social organization and human interaction? What are the processes that drive history? What are the forces that drive modern industrial capitalism? How stable are these forces? What implications do they have for long-term economic stability? For inequality?

General readings:

Introduction to Part I , CST I, pp. 19-25

Section A: Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, CST I, pp. 35-43

Section B: Capitalism and Commodities, CST I, pp. 44-74

Meeting #3. Durkheim: Problems of Social Integration (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).

What factors hold society together? What are the interaction bases for social cohesion? Where does Law come from? What function does law have? Is industrialization bad for social

cohesion?

General readings

Introduction to Part II, CST I, pp. 103-107

The Division of Labor in Society, CST I, pp. 128-149

Douglas, M., Introduction to How Institutions Think, Syracuse University Press, pp. 1-8

Durkheim, E., The Rules of Sociological Method in CST I, pp. 109-127

Meeting #4. Max Weber: The sources of social action (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).

How is domination organized? What is power? What distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate power? What are the dimensions that determine social standing? What are the main features of bureaucracy?

General readings:

Thompson, E.P. (1967). Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism. *Past and Present* 38, pp. 56-97.

Introduction, Part III, in CST I, pp. 165-169

The distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party, CST I, pp. 206-214

The Types of Legitimate Domination, CST I, pp. 215-222

Bureaucracy, CST I, pp. 223-232

Meeting #5. Rational choice and social exchange (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).

Why do people act the ways that they do? What principles guide individual behavior? How can we make sense of how sets of behaviors go together? Rational Choice theories.

Reading:

Introduction to part II of CST II, pp. 81-87

Coleman: Foundations for a Theory of Collective Action, in CST II, pp. 117-125

Olson: The Logic of Collective Action, in CST II, pp. 126-130

Blau, P: Exchange and power in social life, in CST II, pp. 99-110.

Homans, George. (1958) "Social Behavior as Exchange" *American Journal of Sociology* 63(6), pp. 597-606

Emerson, George. "Power-Dependence Relations" *American Sociological Review* 27(1), pp. 31-41

Miller, Dale. 1999. "The Norm of Self-Interest." *American Psychologist* 54: 1053–60.

Meeting #6. Interpretive sociology (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).

Why do people act the ways that they do? What principles guide individual behavior? How can we make sense of how sets of behaviors go together? Here we focus on two solutions to these types of questions: Dramaturgical perspective / Symbolic Interactionism.

Reading:

Introduction to part I of CST II, 25-31

Berger & Luckmann, The social construction of reality, CST II, pp. 42-51

Goffman: The presentation of Self in Everyday Life, in CST II, pp. 51-65

Blumer: Symbolic Interactionism, in CST II, pp. 66-77.

Meeting # 7. Modern Functionalism: Parsons (Prof. Pablo Garcia-Ruiz).

Is there a guiding purpose underlying social structure? Is social organization functional? How does social organization affect individuals? Are there fundamental domains that comprise a social system?

Reading:

Introduction to Part VI, in CST I, pp. 341-346.

Parsons, T., An Outline of the Social System, in CST I, pp. 366-385.

Alexander, J.C., 1987, Twenty Lectures. Sociological Theory since WWII, New York: Columbia University Press, Lectures #2, (Parsons' First Synthesis) #6 (Parsons' Later Theory), and #7 (The Revolt against the Parsonian Synthesis).

Merton, R.K., Manifest and Latent Function, in CST I, pp. 398-404

Guiding questions for T. Parsons, An Outline of the social system

(1) p. 373: what is the main theoretical preoccupation of sociology (according to Parsons)?

(2) How can the physical environment exert some influence on a social system (through the organism and personality of actors)

(3) 3 conditions for a society to continue as a collectivity (p. 378). Could those factors be regarded as explanations of social disintegration? Give one or two examples.

(4) What is a structural change?

What kind of change is it? Give one or two examples.

Types and examples of each source of structural changes

Meeting #8. Perspectives on Culture, Structure, and Social Action (Prof. Pablo Garcia-Ruiz).

How has human action shaped social organization? Does social organization make individual action relevant? Possible? To what extent?

Reading:

Introduction to part V of CST II, pp. 221-225

Introduction to part VI, CST II, pp. 259-265

Giddens. A., Agency, Structure, CST II, pp. 232-243

Giddens, A., Some New Rules of Sociological methods, CST II, pp. 221-226

Taylor, M. (1993). Structure, culture, and action in the explanation of social change. In Booth, W.J., James, P., Meadwell, H. (eds), *Politics and rationality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 89-131.

Meeting #9. Review session (Q&A) (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).**Meeting # 10. Final exam (Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma).****Professors' biographies**

Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma is associate professor at IESE Business School's Department of Managing People in Organizations. His current research focuses on the collaborative and competitive strategies in innovation ecosystems within the health care and social sectors. A second field of interest is the role of technology in the organizing work, especially in virtual, multicultural teams. Prof Rodriguez-Lluesma has published books, refereed papers and book chapters both in philosophy and management, both areas in which he holds doctorates

Sociology

COURSE OUTLINE

Prof. Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma

EMAIL: clluesma@iese.edu

Assistant: Pilar Ysasi-Yasmendi Krauel

EMAIL: PYsasiysasmendi@iese.edu

Pablo Garcia-Ruiz is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). He earned a Ph.D in Philosophy (Social Theory) from the University of Navarra, and his MBA from IESE. His main areas of interest are power dynamics and identity formation in and around organizations, and particularly, the relationship between consumption and identity. He has published widely on these topics in the past years.