

**University of the Western Cape  
Department of Anthropology & Sociology**

**SOC 211  
Classical Sociological Theory  
Course Outline  
2015**

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**Consultation times**

## **Classical sociological theory (SOC 211)**

Academic year 2015, first semester

### **General course objectives**

The discipline of sociology was born in response to a new society, which was shaped by the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution – for this reason there is a core, historical text that covers this period, the development of social theory and historical development. Every student is expected to read Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Revolution* over the duration of the course and in tutorials. This course is designed to study the early development of sociology in Europe, and to trace the implications for contemporary South African society. The course introduces the arguments and writings of the main early thinkers that influenced sociology; examines their social and political contexts; and explores how these classic theories can help us explain current social phenomena. Lastly, the course will interrogate the ideas of the classical thinkers in light of contemporary concepts and issues.

### **Learning objectives**

1. Critically understand key theoretical arguments made by founding fathers of sociology.
2. Understand the socio-historical and ideological contexts of classical sociological perspectives.
3. Find implications of classical sociological theories in current social issues.

### **Lecture times and venues**

Day	Time	Venue

### **Course requirements and weighting**

You are required to attend two lectures every week. You are also required to attend one tutorial session per week. Class and tutorial attendance is very important for this course, as the course sets the base or framework for you to build on in your future studies in sociology and other courses. If you fail to grapple with this course now, it will take double the effort to navigate your progress in the study of sociology, which is the core to other social science disciplines.

In addition to attending classes and doing your tutorial work diligently, this course requires a lot of reading and re-reading in order for you to understand the subject. You are required to read about 50 pages per week on average. It is important to read the texts, and then read them again. We will read both primary and secondary texts – especially primary texts can be difficult to understand, and you will need to re-read them at least once. I encourage you to think about the texts you read in relation to the current South African context and your own experience. How would it be applicable today? Is what the text is saying relevant? How so? Where in today's society can you recognize elements of what you are reading? How do some of the theories relate to what you have experienced, witnessed, or read recently?

The evaluation of the coursework will include the following:

Tutorial (attendance and tasks)	-	20%
Two page assignment	-	35%
Essay	-	45%

Note that the course (semester) work adds up to **60%** of the year (final) mark, hence, you need to take each component very seriously by producing your best work. **You need to attain a minimum of 40% for your coursework in order to qualify to write the final examination.**

### **Tutorial**

A list will be put up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> year notice board for you to sign up for a tutorial group. You are required to attend a tutorial session of 1 hour per week. For this session, you are required to prepare by doing the readings before the session, and preparing the tutorial assignment, which you will be required to submit during the first 5 minutes of the session. Tutorials constitute 20% of your coursework mark. The tutorials will be evaluated using attendance (including participation) and the tutorial assignments. The tutorial programme will be distributed to you in class.

### **Classroom Behaviour**

In order to achieve the goals of this course and to promote collective learning it is essential to:

- Respect the rights of other students to an orderly learning environment.
- Appreciate the instructor's capability and experience.
- Value the principles of academic freedom.

I encourage differences in viewpoints, but you must express your opinion with respect for others. I expect students to pay attention to differences of race, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, class and other forms of social difference.

Cell phones must be turned off or set on silent and NOT VISIBLE in class, lectures or tutorials. In an extreme emergency, if you must receive a phone call please leave the classroom quietly to do so.

### **Assessments**

#### **Two page assignment on Karl Marx**

Your two page assignment (max. 600 words at 1.5 line spacing, 12p font, and 2.5cm margins) is due on 10 March 2015. It counts for 35% of your coursework mark.

For the assignment, select one of the following of Marx's concepts/ constructs:

- Alienation/ estranged labour
- Class conflict
- Ideology

Once you have chosen a concept/ construct, proceed as follows:

1. Identify which concept/ construct you are going to discuss. Select and cite 2 passages of 1-2 lines each from the prescribed readings that have helped you understand the concept. Explain why you think that these excerpts best illustrate what Marx is trying to construct. Note any images, metaphors, or examples that you found particularly helpful in understand the concept, and explain why these are important. (1/3 of your assignment)
2. Connect this concept and these excerpts to other things that you might have read, seen in a film, come across in other classes, or in your own experience. For

example, if you have worked in a job, does your experience remind you of Marx's estranged labour, or an example of class conflict? If you consider yourself a member of a particular social economic class, or cultural community, do you see yourself positioned in a social or class conflict? (1/3 of your assignment)

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of this concept for the conditions of your social life. In what ways does your chosen concept explain your own experience? In what ways is it lacking? What could Marx have considered that would make his theory more relevant to your particular situation? (1/3 of your assignment)

### **Essay**

As part of your coursework, you will be required to submit an essay of 1,200 words (four pages at 1.5 line spacing, 12p font, and 2.5cm margins). Your essay must meet the following requirements:

- It must have a minimum of 1,200 words (max. 1,400 words – NOT more)
- A minimum of four references must be consulted to write the essay
- The essay must be structured to include: introduction, body and conclusion
- In-text and bibliographic references must be clearly written. Please use Harvard referencing style.

The deadline for the submission of the essay is 10 April 2015. The essay constitutes 45% of your coursework mark.

Please choose one of the following topics and write an essay on it, to be submitted as part of your coursework.

1. Compare and contrast structural-consensus theory, conflict theory and interpretive or social action theory as theoretical approaches in sociology.
2. Discuss the sociological theory of Karl Marx in the light of his conflict perspective. How would you compare his theory to the work of Emile Durkheim?
3. For Max Weber, rationality is one of the defining factors that distinguish a modern from a traditional society. Discuss the theoretical work of Max Weber with emphasis on the distinction between a traditional and modern society. How does his theoretical approach differ from that of Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim?

The following guidelines might help you:

1. First, summarise in your own words the concepts/ constructs that you are discussing. What are the main arguments in the theory? What are the authors trying to say? In which contexts were these theories developed?
2. Before you begin to compare, clearly describe every concept/ construct that you are addressing.
3. When you compare, try to give examples for what you are saying. For example, if you compare structural consensus to conflict theory, think of an example that you have read about, or have come across in other classes or your own experience, that can illustrate what you are trying to say.

### **Final Exam**

The final assessment for the course is a 1 hour 30 minutes exam that will be written in the May/ June 2014 semester examinations. It will test students' knowledge of the course after about 14 weeks of lectures and tutorials, assignment and essay. This exam constitutes 40% of the final (year) mark.

**Due dates – please make sure you hand in both assignments by 1pm on the day they are due.**

1. Two page assignment – 11 March 2015
2. Essay – 17 April 2015

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious offense in academic writing and it is viewed seriously by the university. You are required to submit your own original work for the essay. Reference any source you used in the process of writing your essay. That means you cannot copy other people's work and ideas and present it as your own. You will be required to submit your essays to Turnitin. Any form of plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course any student found to have plagiarized will be appropriately sanctioned.

## **Submission Guidelines**

The essays must be submitted, using the attached cover page. (see last page of instructions.)

Your assignment and essay must have a completed **plagiarism declaration, proper referencing and bibliography.**

The model for correct referencing and bibliography appears on e-teaching.

The prescribed plagiarism declaration is set out below (please see last page of this course guide).

## **Turn-It-In Guidelines**

In keeping with the University's policy on plagiarism, the following guidelines are recommended to facilitate the turn-it-in process:

- A turn-it-in report must be submitted with every written submission.
- The system will be opened as soon as the dates for the written submissions are announced.
- Deadlines for the reports will coincide with the date of submission of essays, assignments, reports etc.
- Only the page reflecting the similarity % must be attached to the written work.
- A SIMILARITY INDEX OF 20% IS THE MAXIMUM % THAT WILL BE ACCEPTED.
- SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT A REPORT
- Students are responsible for ensuring that the Turn-it-in report shows their name, student id and similarity index. Negligence in this regard can lead to penalties
- Students are reminded that they also have the responsibility to ensure that they do not allow the abuse of their student ID and reports by other students – negligence in this regard shall be penalized.

- Attempts of deception or falsification of results and fraudulent use of the Turn-it-in system shall lead to serious sanction being leveled against offending students.

## Study themes, readings and lectures

### 1. Introduction to sociological theory

Sociological theories provide the framework for the understanding of society. The development of sociology as a discipline was informed by changes in the socio-political and economic context sparked by the industrial revolution in Europe, among other changes. Sociological theorizing is a response and attempt to understand and explain these changes. The practice of sociological theorizing is defined by different theoretical approaches, which suggest different explanations for issues within a society. These approaches are sometimes contradictory, as reflected in the structure versus agency debate. The dominant approaches include: structural-consensus (functionalism), conflict, and social action or interpretive perspective.

#### Required reading:

1. Hobsbawm, E (1962) **Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848. This book is required reading and a complete PDF will be made available on ikamva.**
2. Lemert C. (1993) Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures. In: *Social Theory: the Multicultural and Classic Readings*, Westview Press (p. 1-18)
3. Jones P, Bradbury L & Boutillier S. (2011) An Introduction to Sociological Theories. In: *Introducing Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press (p. 1-29)
4. Giddens A. (2006) The Development of Sociological Thinking. In: *Sociology* (5<sup>th</sup> edition), (p. 8-28)
5. Haralambos M & Holborn M (2008) Sociological Theory. In: *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. 7<sup>th</sup> edition (p. 855-863; 866-872; 874-878)

Lecture date	Topic	Required readings
February	Introduction	Read the course outline
February	Why Social Theory?	Hobsbawm: Age of Revolution Lemert: Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures Giddens: The Development of Sociological Thinking
February	Sociological theoretical approaches (1): Structural consensus theory	Hobsbawm: Age of Revolution Jones: Introduction to Sociological Theories Haralambos: Sociological Theory
February	Sociological theoretical approaches (2): Conflict theory, social action theory	Hobsbawm: Age of Revolution Jones: Introduction to Sociological Theories Haralambos: Sociological Theory

### 2. Key theoretical issues and concepts in sociological theory

Key theoretical issues, among others, in sociology include: structure and agency, institutions, consensus and conflict. The key concepts that you should know after this course are: structure and system, agency, rationality, culture, ideology, power, the state, social stratification and differentiation, race, class, gender, sexuality. For this theme, you will be required to read not only academic texts.

Required reading:

1. Giddens (2006) Four theoretical issues. In: *Sociology*. (p. 105-114)
2. Waters M (1994), General Theory (p. 11-14), Agency (p. 15-17), Rationality (p. 56-58), Structure (p. 92-94), System (p. 130-133), in: *Modern Sociological Theory*. London: Sage.
3. Marsh I & Keating M (2006) Social stratification and class, in: *Sociology: Making Sense of Society*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (p. 209-217)

Lecture date	Topic	Required readings
February	Key concepts (1): Structure versus agency or structure and agency	Giddens (p. 105-114) Waters (p. 11-17, p. 92-94)
February	Key concepts (2): Rationality and system	Waters (p. 56-58, p. 130-133)
February	Key concepts (3): Social stratification and class	Marsh (p. 209-217)
February	Key concepts applied	

### 3. Karl Marx

Under this theme, we will discuss the theories of Karl Marx in his historical, socio-political context and the importance of his analyses today (read E. Hobsbawm, Age of Revolution). As for the other two main theorists (Durkheim and Weber), we will first situate Marx in his context, and get an overview of his work. We will then read some of his texts (in translation) to get a more detailed understanding of his work, and will cover the following main ideas: ideology, historical materialism, alienation, class conflict, socialist utopia and communist revolution. You will be required to write a two-page assignment on Marx's ideas in today's society. For the last lecture of this theme, the lecturer will ask a few students to volunteer to present their assignment in class for a group discussion.

Required readings:

1. Jones P, Bradbury L & Boutillier S. (2011) Karl Marx. In: *Introducing Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press (p. 30-49)
2. Marsh I & Keating M (2006) Marx and Conflict, in: *Sociology: Making Sense of Society*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (p. 49-57)
3. Engels F. Speech at the graveside of Karl Marx. In: Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 681-682)
4. Marx. Marx on the History of His Opinions. In: Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 3-6)
5. Marx. The German Ideology. In: Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 160-163)
6. Marx. Wage, Labour and Capital. In: Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 203-217)
7. Marx. Estranged Labour. In: Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 70-77)

8. Marx. Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association. In Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 512-519)
9. Marx. Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. In Tucker. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (p. 700-717)

#### Recommended reading

1. Antonio RJ (2011). Karl Marx. In: *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists, Volume 1*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell (p. 115-165)

<b>Lecture date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required readings</b>
<b>February</b>	Karl Marx: Historical and socio-political context	Marsh: Marx and Conflict  Engels: Speech at the graveside of Karl Marx
<b>February</b>	Karl Marx: Ideology	Jones: Karl Marx  Marx: The German Ideology
<b>March</b>	Karl Marx: Historical materialism, class conflict	Marx: On the history of his opinions  Marx: Wage, Labour and Capital
<b>March</b>	Marx: Alienation	Marx: Estranged Labour
<b>March</b>	Marx: Socialist Utopia/ communist revolution	Marx: Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association  Marx: Socialism: Utopian and Scientific
<b>March</b>	Marx today	No reading, class discussion

#### **4. Emile Durkheim**

We look at the theory of Emile Durkheim as the founding theorist of the structural-consensus approach, as expressed in functionalism. Much like Marx, we will first locate Durkheim in his historical socio-political context (read E. Hobsbawm's *Age of Revolution*), and then discuss his ideas in more detail. The last lecture of this theme will use a Durkheimian analysis to a contemporary topic.

#### Required readings:

1. Jones P, Bradbury L & Boutillier S. (2011) Emile Durkheim. In: *Introducing Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press (p. 59-82)
2. Marsh I & Keating M (2006) Durkheim and Consensus, in: *Sociology: Making Sense of Society*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (p. 43-49)
3. Milbrandt T & Pearce F. Emile Durkheim. In: *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists, Volume 1*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell (p. 236-282)
4. Hage G (2003) "Comes a Time We Are All Enthusiasm": Understanding Palestinian Suicide Bombers in Times of Exigophobia. *Public Culture* 15(1): 65-89



Lecture date	Topic	Required readings
March	Emile Durkheim: Historical and socio-political context	Milbrandt: Emile Durkheim
March	Emile Durkheim: Suicide	Marsh: Durkheim and Consensus
April	Durkheim: The Division of Labour	Jones: Emile Durkheim
April	Durkheim today	Hage: "Comes a Time We Are All Enthusiasm": Understanding Palestinian Suicide Bombers in Times of Exigophobia

## 5. Max Weber

Max Weber, the third of the classical founding theorists of sociology, is a social action theorist who is very interested in what defines a modern society. We will look at his concepts around rationality, modernity, and bureaucracy, and read two excerpts from his work. As with the last themes, the final lecture on Weber will look at an analysis of a contemporary topic through a Weberian approach.

### Required Readings:

1. Jones P, Bradbury L & Boutillier S. (2011) Max Weber. In: *Introducing Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press (p. 83-103)
2. Marsh I & Keating M (2006) Weber's Work, in: *Sociology: Making Sense of Society*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (p. 58-65)
3. Weber, M: The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism, Part I: The Problem (p. 1-28)
4. Weber, M (1974): Bureaucracy. In: *Essays in Sociology*. London: Routledge (p. 196-204)
5. Jain A (2004). Using the lens of Max Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy to examine E-Government Research. Proceedings of the 37th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.

### Recommended reading:

1. Kalberg S (2011) Max Weber. In: *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists, Volume 1*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell (p. 305-372)

Lecture date	Topic	Required readings
April	Max Weber: Historical and socio-political context	Jones: Max Weber
April	Max Weber: The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism	Marsh: Weber's work Weber: Part I: The Problem (p. 1-28)
April	Max Weber: Bureaucracy	Weber: Bureaucracy
April	Weber today	Jain: Using the Lens of Max Weber's bureaucracy

## 6. Expanding the outlook

Marx, Durkheim and Weber represent without doubt the most important theorists of their time, yet there are a number of other theorists whose ideas have also held great influence, and continue to be of relevance today. In this theme, we will look at three additional thinkers whose work is also critical for understanding sociology as a discipline today. We will discuss these thinkers in their context (Europe and America), and also critically interrogate the restrictions in the reception of their work at the time.

### Required readings

1. James, CLR. (1969) *The Black Jacobins*. [http://ouleft.org/wp-content/uploads/CLR\\_James\\_The\\_Black\\_Jacobins.pdf](http://ouleft.org/wp-content/uploads/CLR_James_The_Black_Jacobins.pdf), especially chapters 1-5
2. Trotsky, L. (1906) *Results and Prospects*. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/rp-index.htm>, especially Chapter 1, Peculiarities of Russian Historical Development.
3. WEB Du Bois. (1903) *The Souls of Black Folk*. <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/webdubois/dubois souls blackfolk6x9.pdf>, especially first three chapters.

Lecture date	Topic	Required readings
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	After 1789 – the birth of independence and the struggle against slavery	CLR James
24 <sup>th</sup> April	WEB Du Bois	WEB Du Bois
29 <sup>th</sup> April	Leon Trotsky and the Russian periphery of the global system	Leon Trotsky

## 6. Understanding Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical toolkits: Habitus, field and capital

It is important to understand how sociological theoretical concepts explores part of what we do and how we do it in our everyday life. What we assume is that we all have certain habits (habitus). Bourdieu's theory of practice helps us to explore why people have habits, and carry them in particular contexts and the different social and political knowledge we possess.

### **Suggested readings:**

- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a theory of practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) "The forms of capital", Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) In "Other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology". California, Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The logic of practice*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991) "Language and symbolic power", Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

## 8. Classical sociological theory and its discontents

In the previous theme we have begun to understand the thinkers of classical sociological theory in their context. In our last theme, we will look at the relevance of classical sociological thinkers today, and explore some of the critiques of classical theory that modern sociologists have made.

The last lectures of the semester will provide an opportunity to summarise, and revise what you have learned in preparation for the exam.

### Required readings:

1. Seidman S (2013). Afterword to Part V. In: *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*. USA: Blackwell Publishing (p. 263-266)
2. Seidman S (2013). Feminist Theory. In: *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*. USA: Blackwell Publishing (p. 205-225)
3. Seidman S (2013). Colonial Discourse Studies. In: *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*. USA: Blackwell Publishing (p. 254-262)
4. Connell RW (1997). Why is classical theory classical? *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6): 1511-1557
5. Collins R (1997). A sociological guilt trip: Comment on Connell. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6): 1558-1564

### Recommended reading:

1. Seidman S. Lesbian, Gay and Queer Theory/ Heterosexual Studies. In: *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*. USA: Blackwell Publishing (p. 239-253)

Lecture date	Topic	Required readings
May	Reading classical social theory in context	Seidman: Afterword to Part V
May	Challenges of classical social theory	Seidman: Feminist Theory Seidman: Colonial Discourse Studies
May	Critical interrogations	Connell: Why is classical theory classical? Collins: A sociological guilt trip
May	Summary, revision and preparation for exam	No reading required

## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge Dr. Lionel Thaver, Dr. Kola Omomowo and Dr Muller who have prepared previous versions of this course guide. Some of the references of this guide were taken from their previous course guides.

<b>Mark:</b>	<b>%</b>
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## **ESSAY COVER PAGE TEMPLATE**

**DEPARTMENT OF**

**ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY**

Surname:

<b>First name:</b>
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<b>Student number:</b>
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<b>Full-time:</b> _____	<b>Part-time:</b> _____
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<b>Course code:</b>
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<b>Assignment (eg. Essay 1):</b> <b>Topic:</b>
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<b>Lecturer:</b>
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<b>Tutorial group no.:</b> <b>Name of Tutor:</b>
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<p><b><u>Plagiarism declaration:</u> <i>I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work as your own. This essay/submission is my own work. I have not allowed, and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own work.</i></b></p> <p><b>Signature:</b></p>
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