

Soc 300-1: Sources of Sociological Theory

M/W/F 10:00am–10:50am, Social Sciences 411.

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Course Description and Objectives

This course is an introduction to some of the classical thinkers whose work helped establish sociology as a distinctive discipline. It is thus also an introduction to early efforts to explain the turbulent origin, extraordinary growth and inner workings of modern industrial-capitalist societies.

We will spend most of our time discussing five authors: Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim and Georg Simmel. So as not to be overwhelmed, we will pick out a theme to follow as we go. The course focuses on each writer's ideas about the division of labor — that is, both the degree of specialization in the economy and, more broadly, the increasing interdependence of people in a differentiated modern society. Each writer believes that we cannot understand modern societies without understanding social differentiation and the division of labor, but they do not agree on what is most important about it, or what its origins and implications are. Following their arguments on this topic will help us get a feel for their varied theoretical perspectives, without losing sight of their shared empirical concerns. These writers remain very relevant to modern social theory, so we will occasionally jump ahead and read something by a contemporary author.

Sociology 300 is required for sociology majors but open to others. The assigned reading is difficult, and we do not rely on a textbook or other second-hand source. We will devote considerable class time to explaining and discussing the texts. Students will learn to identify the assumptions and arguments in the readings and to

critically assess their empirical and logical strengths and weaknesses. To pass this course, you *must* be prepared to do the reading and writing assignments consistently throughout the semester, and to participate actively in class.

Books and Other Reading

The following books are required reading for the course, and are available at the University bookstore:

Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary forms of Religious Life* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

Donald Levine, editor, *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

S. N. Eisenstadt, editor, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Robert C. Tucker, editor, *The Marx–Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978).

Other required readings will be made available on the class website, accessible via <http://d2l.arizona.edu>.

Requirements and Expectations

Show up on time. Complete the readings on time. Come to class prepared to ask (and be asked) questions and to discuss the readings. Don't bother trying to memorise things you don't understand. Ask questions in class instead.

Examinations

There will be two examinations. The first will be in class (see schedule below for details). The second will be during finals week. Each exam will count for 20% of your grade for the course.

Writing assignments

You will write four 3-4 page memos over the course of the semester. Each memo will count for twelve and a half percent of your final grade. (In other words the memos collectively count for half your final grade.) Memos are due in class on the dates marked in the course schedule below. *You must submit hard copies of your memos in class.* Emailed memos will not be accepted.

I will circulate a choice of topics for each memo in advance. I will be tough in grading these papers, both for their substantive content and for the structure and clarity of the writing. We will talk in more detail in class about my expectations for the memos.

Quizzes

Most weeks I will administer a short in-class quiz, which will test whether you have been keeping up with the reading. Cumulatively, the quizzes will be worth 10% of your final grade.

Grading Summary

Four Memos, 12.5% each	50%
Two Exams, 20% each	40%
Weekly Quizzes	10%

Make-up exams, late papers, extensions

I will only schedule a make-up exam or accept a late paper in the following circumstances: (a) You have a pressing non-academic emergency, such as an illness (for which you will need documentation), death in the family, etc, *and* (b) you contact me beforehand to let me know about this. Should you fail to show up for an exam or turn in a paper for any other reason, I will be forced to record a zero for that assignment. Note that this policy especially applies to lame computer-related excuses.

For other departmental and university policies, see the last page of this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Week	Topics
I: INTRODUCTION	
Wk 1, Aug 20	(1) Preliminaries and general Orientation. Why are we here? What is this course about? Reading: Excerpt from Tim Blanning, <i>The Pursuit of Glory</i> (Viking 2007). Alternatively, look at any standard modern history of Europe. (2) What is the division of labor? Reading: Excerpt from Paul Seabright, <i>The Company of Strangers</i> (Princeton 2004).
II: ADAM SMITH	
Wk 2, Aug 27	(1) Smith and his ideas. The division of labor and its effects on the individual and society. (2) The invisible hand of the market. The idea of distributed co-ordination. Reading: Adam Smith, <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> pp.3-32, 839-41 and 481-487.
Wk 3, Sep 3	(1) Co-ordination and the emergence of social structure. Hierarchical vs Distributed Co-ordination. (2) The power and surprising paradoxes of distributed co-ordination mechanisms. Reading: Excerpt from Thomas Schelling <i>Micromotives and Macrobehavior</i> pp.1-33
Monday Sep 3rd	▷▷ Labor Day. No class.
Friday Sep 7th	▷▷ Discussion Memo No. 1 due in class.
III: KARL MARX	
Wk 4, Sep 10	(1) Introduction to Marx. Reading: Marx-Engels reader pp.512-9, 577-8, 579-85, 681-2. (2) The Division of Labor, technology and alienation. Reading: Marx-Engels reader pp.143-145, 66, 73-81. [Best read in that order.]

Week	Topics
Wk 5, Sep 17	(1) Alienation, Human Nature and Class Conflict. Reading: Marx–Engels reader pp.319–329, 403–417. (2) Film: “A Job at Ford’s.” Reading: E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work–Discipline and Industrial Captialism.”
Wk 6, Sep 24	Marx’s Historical Materialism. Reading: Marx–Engels reader 3–6, 151–5 [begin at second paragraph], 700–717, 203–219, 473–491.
Friday Sep 28th	▷▷ Discussion Memo No. 2 due in class.
Wk 7, Oct 1	(1) Evaluating Smith and Marx. Review of first half of course.
Friday Oct 5	▷▷ In–class midterm exam on Smith and Marx
IV: MAX WEBER	
Wk 8, Oct 8	(1) Introduction: Weber’s biography and main concerns. His comparative and historical approach. Rationalization and disenchantment. (2) Big Question: Why does rationalized capitalism take-off in the West? Reading: “The Origin of Modern Capitalism.” pp.43–56.
Wk 9, Oct 15	(1) Institutional prerequisites of capitalism, cont’d. (2) The Protestant Ethic. Reading: “Protestant Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism.”
Wk 10, Oct 22	(1) Bureaucracy. Power and Legitimate authority. Charisma. Substantive and instrumental rationality. Reading: Max Weber, “The Pure Types of Legitimate Authority”, “Charismatic Authority and its Routinization” and “Bureaucracy,” all in Eisenstadt. (2) Film: <i>Wannsee Konferenz</i> .
Friday Oct 26	▷▷ Discussion Memo No. 3 due in class.

Week	Topics
V: ÉMILE DURKHEIM	
Wk 11, Oct 29	(1) Introduction: the division of labor as a problem of moral order. Reading: “The Subject Matter of Sociology”, in Giddens (ed) pp.63–68. (2) Social structure and social solidarity: the <i>conscience collective</i> and the moral order. Mechanical and organic solidarity. Reading: “Forms of Social Solidarity” in Giddens (ed) pp.123–128, 135–140. (3) “Moral Individualism” as a form of solidarity. Reading: “The Decline of Mechanical Solidarity and the Emergence of Moral Individualism” in Giddens (ed) 144–7.
Wk 12, Nov 5	(1) Durkheim on Religion, ritual, and social order. Sacred and profane. How to read the <i>Elementary Forms</i> . Reading: <i>Elementary Forms of Religious Life</i> , pp.1–10, 101–111. Religion as a reflection of social structure. Reading: <i>Elementary Forms of Religious Life</i> pp.153–168, 322–323.
Monday Nov 12th	▷▷ Veterans’ Day. No Class.
VI: GEORG SIMMEL	
Wk 13, Nov 19	(1) The division of labor, individual identity and experience. (2) Form and content of social interaction. (3) Simmel on social conflict. Reading: Simmel pp.23–35, 70–95.
Monday Nov 19th.	▷▷ Discussion Memo No. 4 due in Class.
Wk 14, Nov 19	(1) Social identities and social types. “The Stranger” and “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” Reading: Simmel pp.143–149, 324–339.
Friday Nov 23	▷▷ Thanksgiving. No Class.
Wk 15, Nov 26	Finishing Simmel.
Wk 16, Dec 3	Summary and Review.

Week	Topics
TBA	▷▷ Final Exam.

University and Departmental Policies

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to observe the University's Code of Academic Integrity. The Code can be found at: <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>.

Behavior in the Classroom

Students are expected to observe the University's Student Code of Conduct as it pertains to classroom behavior (see <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>), and should be familiar with University policies against threatening behavior by students (see <http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml>).

Students with Disabilities

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may affect your ability to fully participate.

Officially Excused Absences

1. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.
2. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.

References

Durkheim, Émile, *The Elementary forms of Religious Life* (Oxford University Press, 2001), Carol Cosman, Translator.

Eisenstadt, S. N., editor, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Levine, Donald, editor, *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

Tucker, Robert C., editor, *The Marx–Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978).