

SA 531: Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology

Objectives

The objectives of the course are to help students to (a) learn major and diverse perspectives in sociology, (b) learn to comprehend society, social institutions, social processes and human social agents in alternative ways, and (c) learn to utilize such perspectives to carry out research on social institutions, social processes and human social agents.

I. Sociological Thinking (20)

- A. The sociological imagination and the promise of sociology
- B. Reductionism and non-reductionism: Sociological versus biological (and physiological, genetic, chemical, etc.), psychological, 'natural' and supernatural explanations of social institution and social change
- C. Significance of perspective and theory
- D. Sociology of knowledge: Basic principles and protocol
- E. History of early sociology: Political, economic, religious and intellectual contexts
- F. Classical sociology:
 - a. Comte's method of social inquiry and the idea of human progress
 - b. Marx: Overall doctrine and dynamics of social change
 - c. Spencer and growth, structure and differentiation
 - d. Durkheim: General approach, individual and society, and religion
 - e. Weber: Types of authority, and Protestantism and the rise of capitalism
 - f. Cooley, the 'looking-glass self' and the nature and history of human groups

II. Structural-Functional Perspective (15)

- A. Historical context
- B. Key arguments
 - Whole, part and systemic interrelationships
 - Consensus, stability, order versus conflict, instability and change
 - Functional prerequisites or imperatives
 - Functional unity, universality and indispensability and Merton's reformulation
 - Manifest and latent function and dysfunction
 - Protocol of functional analysis
- C. Variants: Societal (Durkheim), Individualistic (Malinowski), Structural (Radcliffe-Brown), Social systemic (Parsons)
- D. Critique
- E. Application to: (a) Stratification, (b) Deviance, (c) Religion

III. Marxist Perspective (20)

- A. Context
- B. Key arguments
 - Historical specificity of social institutions and capitalism as a specific historical category
 - Key features of economy, polity and society under capitalism
 - Dialectics
 - Idealism, materialism and dialectical historical materialism
 - Mode of production and infrastructure and superstructure
 - Commodification of social life and alienation
 - Class and class struggle
 - Nature of state
 - Social change and revolution
- C. Variants: (a) Structural Marxism, (b) Conflict functionalism, (c) Lenin, (d) Luxemburg, (e) Gramsci
- D. Critique
- E. Application: (a) Consciousness, (b) Religion, (c) Family and marriage

IV. World-System Perspective (20)

- A. Context
- B. Key arguments:
 - Evolution of capitalism and the rise of the modern world-system
 - Key features of the modern world system
 - Priority of world-system over regional and local systems and simultaneous constitution of world and regional and local systems
 - World division of labor and global movement of commodity, labor, finance and culture
 - Globalization and liberalization
 - Development and underdevelopment
 - Economic cycles and political, economic and military crises *within* world system
 - Crisis of world system, hegemonic shift and demise of capitalism
- C. Variants: (a) Wallerstein-Frank debate on the origin of 'modern world-system', (b) World-system and dependency debate, (c) Wallerstein and *Monthly Review* debate
- D. Application: (a) Growth of NGOs and INGOs, (b) International migration, (c) Global mass media
- E. Critique

V. Critical Theory and Jurgen Habermas (15)

- A. Context
- B. Key arguments
 - Emancipation
 - Nature of society and human beings

- Social change
- Critique of science and sociology
- Critique of classical Marxist perspective
- C. Early critical theory and Habermas
 - The public sphere
 - Critique of science
 - Legitimation crisis
 - Distorted and undistorted communication
 - System and lifeworld
 - Evolution

VI. Actor-Dominant Perspective (25)

- Context
- The idea of interpretation
- Symbolic interaction
 - George Herbert Mead's early synthesis
 - Mead's central theories and methods
 - Symbolic interaction and the Chicago School
 - Herbert Blumer and his perspective
 - Erving Goffman and the 'presentation of self in everyday life'
- Phenomenology
 - Alfred Schutz and phenomenological sociology
 - Theories of Alfred Schutz
 - Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*
- Ethnomethodology
 - Defining ethnomethodology
 - Diversification of ethnomethodology
 - Harold Garfinkel and ethnomethodology
 - Examples of ethnomethodology
 - Ethnomethodological criticism of 'traditional sociology'
- Critique of actor-dominant perspective

VII. Structuration Perspective (20)

- A. Historical context
- B. Classical formulations
 - Marx: History, structure and the objective versus class consciousness, class struggle and political will and the subjective
 - Weber: iron cage of rationality and disenchantment of world versus types of human social action
 - Gramsci: Hegemony and political will
 - Durkheim: Externality of social facts, social constraints and the elevation of the collective and undermining of agency
 - Parsons: System versus action frame of reference
 - Bourdieu: Habitus versus field

- C. Formulation of Anthony Giddens
 - Agent and agency
 - Agency and power
 - Structure and structuration
 - Duality of structure
 - Forms of institution
 - Time, body, encounters
 - Structuration theory and forms of research

VIII. Micro-Macro Perspectives (15)

- A. Historical context
- B. Key problems
 - The polar positions: Macro-micro extremism
 - Relative priority of macro versus micro and macro-micro integration
 - George Ritzer
 - Jeffrey Alexander
 - Norbert Wiley
 - James Coleman
 - Peter Blau
 - Randall Collins
 - Richard Munch and Neil Smelser

REQUIRED READINGS

Unit I. Thinking Sociologically

1. 'The promise.' Chapter 1 (Pp. 3-24) of *The Sociological Imagination* by C Wright Mills. London: Oxford University Press. 1959.
2. 'Sociology as an individual pastime.' Chapter 1 (Pp. 11-36) of *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective* by Peter Berger. London: Penguin. 1963.
[Short extracts from the preceding two chapters are available Pp. 5-10 and 11-20 in Ron Matson (ed.), *The Spirit of Sociology: A Reader*. Delhi: Pearson Education. 2005. First Indian Reprint.]
3. 'A historical sketch of sociological theory: The early years.' Chapter 1 of *Sociological Theory* by **George Ritzer**. Third edition. New York, McGraw-Hill. 1992.
4. "Between reductionism and sociologism.' Pp. 330-1 in Ritzer.
5. 'Sociology in Nepal: Underdevelopment amidst growth' by Chaitanya Mishra. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 32(1), January 2005: 93-128.
6. 'Rules for the explanation of social fact.' Chapter 5 of *The Rules of Sociological Method*. Translated by Sarah Solovay and John Mueller. Edited by George Catlin. New York: Free Press. Only Pp. 89-112. [Also published in Paul Bohannon and Mark Glazer (eds.), *High Points in Anthropology*. New York: Alfred Knopf. Only Pp. 234-45.]
7. 'Classical social theory, II: Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim' by Antonino Palumbo and Alan Scott in **Austin Harrington** (ed.),

- Modern Social Theory: An Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press. 2005. See only Pp. 51-3.
8. 'Emile Durkheim 1858-1917.' Chapter 4 of *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* by **Lewis Coser**. Indian Edition. New Delhi: Rawat. 2002. Only Pp. 129-32.
 9. 'The nature of sociological theorizing.' Chapter 1 (Pp. 1-37) of *The Structure of Sociological Theory* by **Jonathan Turner**. Jaipur: Rawat. 2001.
 10. 'Introduction: What is social theory?' by Austin Harrington, Pp. 1-12 in Harrington.
 11. 'Classical sociological theory.' Pp. 1-40 in Ritzer.
 12. 'The origin of sociological theory' Pp. 3-31 in *Sociological Theory* by **Bert Adams and RA Sydie**. New Delhi: Vistaar. 2002.
 13. Coser, Pp. 43-47, 55-7, 91-3, 129-39, 226-7, 305-7, 307-10.
 14. "Sociology: A multi-paradigm science.' Pp. 662-6 in Ritzer.
 15. 'The sociology of knowledge.' Pp. 510-21 in *Social Theory and Social Structure* by **Robert Merton**. Enlarged edition. New York: Free Press. 1968.

Unit II. Functionalist Perspective

1. Merton, Pp. 79-96, 104-8, 114-36, 185-214.
2. Coser, 136-9, 140-2.
3. Turner, Pp. 37-45, 45-7, 47-48, 48-50, 54-6, 68-73, 87-101.
4. Ritzer, 94-7, 233-35, 237-39, 239-49.
5. Wilbert Moore and Kingsley Davis. 'Some principles of stratification: The functionalist position' in Dipankar Gupta (ed.), *Social Stratification*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1991. Pp. 441-53.
6. 'Conservatism and radicalism in Sociology' and 'Out of this world: the sociological theory of Talcott Parsons,' Pp. 11-6 and 29-43 in *Sociology as Social Criticism* by T.B Bottomore. New Delhi: S Chand and Company. 1975.

Unit III. Marxist Perspective

1. 'Marx on the history of his opinions.' Pp. 3-6 in *The Marx-Engels Reader* by Robert C. Tucker (ed.). Second edition. New York: Norton. 1978. [Also often published as 'Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy' including in *Preface and Introduction to A Critique of Political Economy*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press. 1976. Pp. 1-7.
2. 'The method of political economy.' Pp. 236-44 in Tucker [also in *Preface and Introduction to A Critique of Political Economy*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press. 1976. Pp. 30-41.]
3. 'Marxism and modern Sociology' and 'Marxism, pluralism and orthodoxy.' Pp. 1-13 and 14-28 in *Marxism and Class Analysis* by Andre Betille. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1992.
4. 'The use of Marxian method of class analysis.' Pp. 432-40 in Dipankar Gupta (ed.), *Social Stratification*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1997.

5. 'Estranged labor.' Pp. 71-81 in Tucker.
6. 'The German ideology.' Pp. 146-63 in Tucker.
7. 'The possibility of non-violent revolution.' Pp. 522-24 in Tucker.
8. 'Manifesto of the communist party.' Pp. 473-500 in Tucker.
9. Turner, 132-38, 165-67.
10. Ritzer, 44-75, 279-80, 293-304.
11. Adams and Sydnie, 145-64, 427-8.
12. Coser, 43-58, 68-76.
13. 'पुंजीवाद र नाशवान पुंजीवादको विशिष्टता' । चैतन्य मिश्रको पुंजीवाद र नेपाल को पेज ३७-७० र ७१-१२६ । काठमाण्डु: मूल्याङ्कन प्रकाशन गृह । २०६३ ।

Unit IV. World-Systems Perspective

1. 'Introduction: On the study of social change.' Pp. 3-11 in *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy*. (Volume I of the Modern World-System trilogy.) New York: Academic press. 1974.
2. 'Introduction.' Pp. 1-4 and 15-36 in *Accumulation on the World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment* by Samir Amin. Volume I and Volume 2 Combined. London: Monthly Review. 1974.
3. 'Preface' and 'Introduction to real world history vs. Eurocentric social theory.' Pp. xv-xxix and 1-51 in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* by Andre Gunder Frank. New Delhi: Vistaar. 1998.
4. 'Left politics in the age of transition: An exchange: Immanuel Wallerstein and MR's editors.' *Monthly Review* 53(January 2002): 17-31.
5. 'On development and underdevelopment.' By Sing C. Chew and Robert A. Denemark in Sing Chew and Robert Denemark (eds.) *The Underdevelopment of Development*. New Delhi: Sage. 1999. Pp. 1-13.
6. 'Underdevelopment and its remedies.' By Immanuel Wallerstein in Chew and Denemark. Pp. 355-61.
7. 'World-systems: Similarities and differences.' By Christopher Chase-Dunn in Chew and Denemark. Pp. 246-58.
8. 'The continuity thesis in world development.' By Barry K. Gills in Chew and Denemark. Pp. 226-45.
9. 'Globalization: A world-systems perspective.' By Christopher Chase-Dunn. *Journal of World-Systems Research*. Vol. V, 2(Summer 1999): 187-215.
10. 'Immanuel and me with-out hyphen.' By Andre Gunder Frank. *Journal of World-Systems Research*. Vol. VI, 2(Summer, Fall 2000), Special issue: Festschrift for Immanuel Wallerstein, Part I: 216-31.
11. 'A theoretical approach to the migration of workers.' Chapter 2 of *Labor Migration under Capitalism* by History Task Force for Centro de Estudios Puertorriquenos. New York: Monthly Review. 1979.
12. 'Development and underdevelopment in Nepal: A preliminary sociological perspective.' Pp. 105-35 in James Fisher (ed.) *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology*. Department of sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, 1987.

13. 'Sustainable tourism, protected areas and livelihoods of local communities in developing countries' by Sanjay K. Nepal. *The International Journal of Sustainable development and World Ecology* 4(2, January 1997): 123-35.
14. *The Politics of the World-Economy: The States, the Movements and the Civilizations* by Immanuel Wallerstein. London: Cambridge University Press. 1984.
15. 'World-systems theory: Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-).' Pp . 457-66 in Adams and Sydie.
16. 'The modern world-system.' Pp. 316-21 in Ritzer.

Unit V. Critical Theory and Jurgen Habermas

1. Turner, 184-213.
2. Ritzer, 280-93.
3. Adams and Sydie, 412-22.
4. 'Modernity and the growth of communicative reason' by Gerard Delanty. Pp. 279-83 in Austin Harrington (ed.), *Modern Social Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2005.

Unit VI. Actor-Dominant Perspectives

1. Harrington, 110-18.
2. Turner, 313-8, 327-31, 333-7, 349-52, 389-406.
3. Coser, 333-41.
4. Ritzer, 326-33, 348-55, 355-62, 362-4, 371-5, 375-80, 387-92, 392-412.
5. Adams and Sydie, 502-17.

Unit VII. Structuration Perspective

1. 'Marx on the history of his opinions.' Pp. 3-6 in *The Marx-Engels Reader* by **Robert C. Tucker** (ed.). Second edition. New York: Norton. 1978. [Also often published as 'Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy' including in *Preface and Introduction to A Critique of Political Economy*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press. 1976. Pp. 1-7.
2. Ritzer, 45-6, 49-54.
3. Coser, 45-6, 55-6.
4. Turner, 45-50.
5. Coser, 217-9, 230-4.
6. Adams and Sydie, 173-4, 177.
7. Ritzer, 115-7, 125-7, 136-40.
8. Harrington, 75-6.
9. Ritzer, 279-80.
10. Adams and Sydie, 427-8, Harrington, 157-9.
11. Harrington, 51-3, 54-8.
12. Ritzer, 104-8.
13. Turner, 322-3.
14. Coser, 132-6.
15. Turner 52-65.
16. Coser, 563-4.
17. Adams and Sydie, 549-53.

18. Ritzer, 203-6.
19. Harrington, 93-5.
20. Ritzer, 577-82.
21. Harrington 222-4.
22. 'Introduction' and 'Elements of a theory of structuration' (Chapter 1) of *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration*. Los Angeles: University of California. 1984. Pp. xiii-xxxvii, 1-40.
23. 'The theory of structuration' by John B. Thompson. Pp. 56-76 in David Held and John B. Thompson (eds.), *Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and His Critics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989.
24. 'The political and sociological project,' 'Agency' and 'Structure' (Chapters 1, 3 and 4; Pp. 4-28, 51-70 and 71-92) of *The Sociology of Anthony Giddens*. London: Pluto. 2003.
25. 'Anthony Giddens (1938-)' in Adams and Sydie. Pp. 383-91.
26. 'The structuration theory of Anthony Giddens.' in Turner. Pp. 456-78.
27. 'Major examples of agency-structure integration' in Ritzer. Pp. 569-74.

Unit VIII. Micro-Macro Perspectives

1. 'Micro-macro integration' and 'Agency-structure and micro-macro linkages'. Chapter 14 and part of Chapter 15 of Ritzer. Pp. 535-66 and 588-93.
2. 'The macrostructuralism of Peter M. Blau' and 'The microstructuralism of Randall Collins'. Chapters 20 and 21 of Turner. Pp. 425-34 and 435-455.
3. 'From reduction to linkage: The long-run view of micro-macro debate.' by Jeffrey Alexander and Bernhard Giesen in **Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, Richard Munch and Neil J. Smelser** (eds.), *The Micro-Macro Link*. Berkeley: University of California. Pp. 1-42.
4. 'Microfoundations and macrosocial behavior' by James S. Coleman. Pp. 153-73 in Alexander, Giesen, Munch and Smelser.
5. 'Relating the micro and the macro' by Richard Munch and Neil Smelser. Pp. 356-87 in Alexander, Giesen, Munch and Smelser.