

SOC/C&E SOC 475

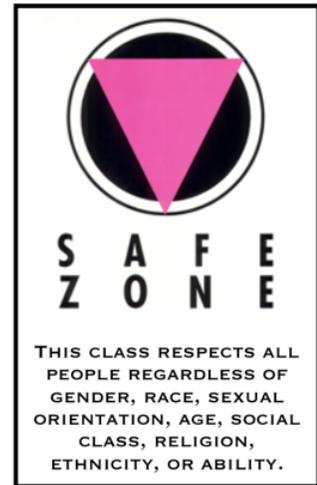
CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Online Sessions TR 9:30-10:45 AM BBC Ultra	Instructor: Kristinn Már (Ársælsson)
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I want this course to be **useful** for you. That means I am going to be **flexible** regarding course assignments and due dates, but demanding **effort and quality work**. This course is mostly about **reading** texts that were written in the late 1800s and early 1900s. However, **understanding** the theories laid out in those texts is only part of our goal. Additionally, you will **critique** these texts from **various perspectives and standpoints**, including whether and how they are relevant today (see more details on course objectives below). I encourage you to **raise your hand in class, come and talk, or email me** with questions and issues.

You will attend **two (synchronous) lecture sessions** per week. The lecture part of these sessions will be recorded and made available. Lectures introduce you to the course content, explain and build on assigned readings, but also go beyond them. In these sessions you will be challenged to **critique and apply** theories to life outside the classroom.

I (and the Department of Sociology), embrace the notion that intellectual community is **enriched and enhanced by diversity**, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class, age, ability, and religion. We have different backgrounds and multiple layers to our different identities. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know of ways to **improve** the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students!



CONTACT INFORMATION

Do not hesitate to contact me about anything related to the course or social science more generally; and feel free to join me and other students during office hours for a free-wheeling discussion. Email me to schedule a private appointment.

****NOTE**** All announcements for the course will be distributed through **Canvas**. Check your personal settings in Canvas to make sure you get notifications!

Office Hours	Location	E-mail
TR: 10:45 AM	BBC Ultra on Canvas	kristinn.mar@wisc.edu

I try to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. If you have not received a response after 48 hours, please feel free to send a follow up email. It may take longer to reply to emails sent on weekends.

GRADE COMPONENTS & ASSESSMENTS

Reading Reflections (40%): Each week (starting Unit 2), you are expected to write a 400-500 (strict) word reflection on the assigned (and optional) readings. In these reflections you should a) summarize (less than 120 words) the theory/theories from the readings, b) offer a critique (focus, theory and/or methods), and c) discuss its relevance today (is it helpful/useful). I will grade each reflection. Instead of a summary you can provide a directed acyclical graph (DAG). A clearly written reflection that covers a), b) and c), demonstrates you have carefully read the material, and offers a thoughtful engagement will receive an A (see grading scale below). The grade does not reflect whether you *correctly understood* the readings but rather your honest engagement and improvement throughout the course. Post your reflections on Canvas before 5 PM on Monday on the week of lectures for each unit. You can skip one reflection without penalty, no questions asked. If you need more flexibility, contact me beforehand.

Writing Assignment (30%): You will complete one writing assignment over the course of the semester. For the assignment you choose from one of four available assignments: a) review of recent empirical studies, b) applying theory to a contemporary case, c) empirical investigation, or d) a blog post critique. You can also suggest a further topic, subject to instructor approval. You will turn in a draft, receive feedback, revise your paper, and turn in a final version for grading. The draft is can be turned in any time before end of October 31st. The revised version of the paper is due before end of December 14th. Further information about the writing assignments will be posted on Canvas.

Methods or Presentation Assignment (20%): You can select between either a methods assignment or a short presentation. In the methods assignment you will model a theory, estimate its effect using simulated data, and write a brief report. No prior training in quantitative methods is necessary to complete this assignment. The methods assignment will be a take-home exam during the last week of the course (Dec 7-11th). For the presentation, you will record a 7-minute talk where you contrast and evaluate two theories we read during this class. You can turn in your presentation at any time during the semester before end of November 29th. Further details about these assignments will be available on Canvas.

Lecture Attendance and Engagement (10%): Attendance in lecture and reviewing pre-recorded lectures is required. However, you can miss — for good reasons of course — up to three lectures, no questions asked. If you need to miss more than three classes due to special circumstances, please email me. We will use parts of lecture sessions for discussions. Slides are posted on Canvas and you are welcome to come to office hours with questions regarding topics from lectures you missed. You might also consider acquiring contact information from one or two classmates at the beginning of the semester who are willing to share notes.

Extra Assignment (+10%): At any point during the course you can select to write an extra assignment to boost your grade. In this assignment you will read, summarize, and critique a recent empirical interrogation of classic sociological theory. The final deadline for this paper is December 14th. Further information about the extra assignment will be posted on Canvas.

Honors Assignment: To complete the course with honors, you need to finish an honors assignment. Options for the assignment will be posted on Canvas. If you have other ideas for an assignment that would be more useful for you, do not hesitate to ask for approval.

Grading Scale

A	AB	B	BC	C	D	F
91-100%	85-90%	80-84%	75-79%	70-74%	60-69%	59% and below

24-Hour Policy on Grading: Please wait 24 hours before scheduling an appointment with the TA or instructor about grades on assignments or quizzes. It is understandable that when a student receives a grade they did not expect, they want to address it. However, 24 hours gives the student time to reflect, read comments, carefully look over the assignment, and decide what exactly they want to address.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- **Familiarity with early sociological theory:** Students will be introduced to foundational and historical texts in sociology.
- **Critical interrogation of the strengths and weaknesses of social theory:** Students will learn how to assess theoretical arguments; as well as the strengths and weaknesses of different methods and data.
- **Evaluation of the importance and relevance of classic social theory:** Students will be asked to discuss the relevance of classic theories, and critically question the “canon:” what is included and what is left out of focus.
- **Accessible writing on complex issues:** Students will learn how to clearly summarize and provide thoughtful criticism of social theories.
- **Reflexivity:** Identifying and learning about the various social influences on their own attitudes, behaviors, and personalities.

DEPARTMENTAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content covered in the course, the course has been designed to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

- **Critically Evaluate Published Research:** Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
- **Communicate Skillfully:** Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- **Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:** Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order, structure, and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation. They can identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena as well as develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
- **See Things from a Global Perspective:** Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences among residents of the United States. They understand the ways events and processes in one country are linked to those in other countries.
- **Work effectively in groups:** Students will improve their skills in understanding group dynamics and working well with people from different backgrounds with different strengths and weaknesses.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to us! If you have already established accommodations with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (MDRC), please use the new McBurney Connect online portal to send a Faculty Notification Letter (FNL) for this course to both the instructor and TA. If you are unsure how to do this, talk with your McBurney accommodation specialist for instructions. (Note that the digital FNL system has replaced the previous hard-copy McBurney VISA system.) Please send your FNLs to the instructor and TA at your earliest convenience, but no later than **Friday, September 11th**. This deadline is that we are able to provide you with the accommodations necessary to allow you to engage with and thrive in the course. If you have not yet established services through the McBurney Center, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (this includes but is not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), I encourage you to contact the MDRC at 608-263-2741 to make an appointment. General information for students can be found at <https://mcburney.wisc.edu>. The McBurney Center offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. It is important to your instructor the Department of Sociology, and UW-Madison as a whole to create inclusive and accessible learning environments for you as students!

NOTE: Even if you don't have accommodations through the McBurney Center, feel free to talk to me about anything that affects your performance in this course. This includes (but is not limited to) things like "I'm a single parent," "I have to work to support myself," and "I have a hard time speaking up in discussion."

Notification of Sports, Religious, & Other Conflicts: Please alert your instructor of any anticipated absences due to participation in team sports (documentation required), religious holidays (no documentation required), or for any other reason no later than **Friday, September 11th**.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A lack of familiarity with the University's policies around plagiarism and academic dishonesty does not constitute an excuse for violating them. You can read more about UW-Madison's policies [here](#). Write your own papers and cite all your sources.

COMMENTS OR CONCERNS?

The Department of Sociology embraces the notion that intellectual community is enriched and enhanced by diversity along several dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class, age, ability, and religion. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated! Please let us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

The Department of Sociology distributes student evaluations of all instructors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor (kristinn.mar@wisc.edu) or the chair of the department (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu). The main office of the Department of Sociology is located at 8128 Sewell Social Science.

CAMPUS RESOURCES



COVID-19 Response: Information regarding the university's response to COVID-19 is available online. There you can find info on what the university is doing to support you as well as their measures for health and safety during the pandemic.

<https://smartrestart.wisc.edu/>



UW-Madison Writing Center: For course papers and general writing guidance, students may wish to visit the campus writing center. Excellent writing instructors on staff offer group classes and one-on-one meetings to help with all aspects of the writing process, from brainstorming to polishing a final draft. Even the best writers have room for improvement! 6171 Helen C. White Hall. (608) 263-1992. www.writing.wisc.edu.



Student Technology Training Program: Free technology training for all students. Call (608) 265-6624 or email sts@doit.wisc.edu. www.doit.wisc.edu/training/student.



McBurney Disability Resource Center: Students with disabilities, visible and invisible, should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center.

702 W Johnson St #2104. (608) 263-2741. www.mcburney.wisc.edu.



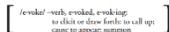
University Counseling and Consultation Services (C&CS): School (and life) can be stressful! To obtain assistance for personal, social, career, and/or study skills problems, please contact the counseling center at University Health Services.

333 East Campus Mall, 7th Floor. (608) 265-5600 (option 2). www.uhs.wisc.edu/services/counseling.



End Violence on Campus (EVOC): EVOC exists to prevent violence as well as to support survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. Please contact EVOC to learn more about their services or to make an appointment.

8th Floor of 333 East Campus Mall. (608) 265-1483. evoc@uhs.wisc.edu.



Greater University Tutoring Services (GUTS): volunteer tutors at GUTS provide assistance with academic courses, study skills, conversational English, and intercultural exchange. They provide free tutoring and mentoring to hundreds of students and university affiliates each semester.

333 East Campus Mall, 4th floor, Office # 4413. (608) 263-5666.

<http://www.guts.wisc.edu>.



Multicultural Student Center (MSC): the primary mission of the MSC is to collaboratively strengthen and sustain an inclusive campus where all students, particularly students of color and other historically underserved students, can realize an authentic Wisconsin Experience.

716 Langdon Street, Red Gym, Second Floor. (608) 262-4503. <https://msc.wisc.edu>.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

All readings – required and recommended – will be available on Canvas.

The crux of this course is *reading* original texts, most of which were written between 1850 and 1920. As a result, their style is often less familiar and accessible compared to (many) contemporary texts. Expect to spend more time, for the same amount of text, than you are used to for undergraduate level textbooks. You will read 50-100 pages of text (mostly selections from books or articles) during most weeks. Your emphasis should be on extracting the authors *theory* – understanding its structure – rather than rote memorization of concepts/facts. Retrieve what is useful – critique what is not.

Course Schedule

Part I: Meta-theory, Origins, and the Canon

- Unit 1: Getting Started
- Unit 2: What is Theory and How to Critique It?
- Unit 3: The Relationship Between Theory and Methods
- Unit 4: Statements, Origins and Canon Debate

Part II: Social Structure – Ideational, Material, and Relational

- Unit 5: Progress, Evolution, and History
- Unit 6: Capitalism
- Unit 7: Democracy
- Unit 8: Ideology and Rationalization

Part III: The Self & Society

- Unit 9: The Problem of Order
- Unit 10: Relations & Locations
- Unit 11: Alienation & Anomie

Part IV: Inequality, Oppression, and Emancipation

- Unit 12: The Marginalized
- Unit 13: What needs to be done?
- Unit 14: Is Classical Theory Classical and Relevant Today? – Should Social Science Aspire to Change the World?

PART I: META-THEORY, ORIGINS AND THE CANON

Unit 1: Getting Started

****Note**** The required readings this week are light because next week's readings – and a reflection on those readings – should be completed by Monday of Unit 2.

Required Readings

- Comte (1822): “Plan of the Scientific Work Necessary for the Reorganization of Society.”
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Unit 2: What is Theory and How to Critique It?

Required Readings

- Stinchcombe (1968): “Constructing Social Theories.”
- Risjord (2014): “Philosophy of Social Science: A Contemporary Introduction.”
- Zahle (2017): “Emergence.”
- Martin (2015): “Thinking Through Theory.”

Optional Readings

- Ermakoff (2017): “Shadow Plays: Theory's Perennial Challenges.”
 - Rosenberg (2017): “Functionalism.”
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Unit 3: The Relationship Between Theory and Methods

Required Readings

- Coleman (1990): “Foundations of Social Theory.”
- Longino (2014): “Individuals or Populations?”
- Martin (2018): “Thinking Through Statistics.”
- Rohrer (2018): “Thinking Clearly About Correlations and Causation: Graphical Causal Models for Observational Data.”

Optional Readings

- Ermakoff (2019): “Causality and History: Modes of Causal Investigation in Historical Sciences.”
 - Hedström and Bearman (2009): “What is Analytical Sociology All About? An Introductory Essay.”
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Unit 4: Statements, Origins and Canon Debate

Required Readings

- Durkheim (1895): “The Rules of Sociological Method.”
- Du Bois (1897): “A Program for a Sociological Society.”
- Nisbet (1966): “The Sociological Tradition.”
- Connell (1997): “Why is Classical Theory Classical?”

Optional Readings

- Collins (1997): “A Sociological Guilt Trip: Comment on Connell.”
 - Stinchcombe (1982): “Should Sociologists Forget Their Mothers and Fathers.”
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PART II: SOCIAL STRUCTURE MATERIAL, RELATIONAL AND IDEATIONAL

Unit 5: Progress, Evolution and History

Required Readings

- Condorcet (1794): “Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind.”
- Spencer (1857): “Progress: It’s Law and Cause.”
- Marx (1845/1859): “The German Ideology” & “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.”
- Du Bois (1903): *On the Meaning of Progress* from “The Souls of Black Folk.”

Optional Readings

- National Constituent Assembly (1789): “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen”
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Unit 6: Capitalism

Required Readings

- Marx & Engels (1848/1867): “The Communist Manifesto” and “Capital Vol. I.”
 - Weber (1905/1920): “Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”
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Unit 7: Democracy

Required Readings

- Tocqueville (1835/1840): “Democracy in America.”
 - Martineau (1837): “Society in America.”
 - Michels (1911): “Political Parties.”
 - Du Bois (1903/1945): “Souls of Black Folk” and “Color and Democracy.”
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Unit 8: Ideology and Rationalization

Required Readings

- Durkheim (1912): “Elementary Forms of Religious Life
- Marx (1844): “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right.’”
- Du Bois (1903): “Souls of Black Folk.”
- Weber (1921): “Economy and Society.”

Optional Readings

- Re-read Marx (Unit 5).
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PART III: THE SELF & SOCIETY

Unit 9: The Problem of Order

** Draft of writing assignment due by end of October 31st. **

Required Readings

- Tönnies (1887): “Community and Society.”
- Durkheim (1893): “The Division of Labour in Society.”
- Du Bois (1899): “The Philadelphia Negro.”

Optional Readings

- Consider re-reading Comte (Unit 1), Condorcet (Unit 5), and Marx & Engels (Unit 6).
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Unit 10: Relations, Locations and Action

Required Readings

- Addams (1899): “Trade Unions and Public Duty.”
- Weber (1922): “Economy and Society.”
- Simmel (1903/1908): “The Problem of Sociology,” “Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality,” “Metropolis and Mental Life,” and “The Triad.”
- Mead (1934): “Mind, Self and Society.”

Optional Readings

- Wright (1996): “The Continuing Relevance of Class Analysis – Comments.”
 - Hochschild (1979): “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure.”
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Unit 11: Alienation & Anomie

Required Readings

- Marx (1844): “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844.”
- Durkheim (1897): “Suicide.”
- Simmel (1900): “Philosophy of Money.”

Optional Readings

- Merton (1938): “Social Structure and Anomie.”
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PART IV: INEQUALITY, OPPRESSION AND EMANCIPATION

Unit 12: The Marginalized

** Presentations are due by the end of November 29th. **

Required Readings

- Tocqueville (1835): “Democracy in America.”
- Martineau (1837): “Society in America.”
- Du Bois (1903/1935): “Souls of Black Folk” and “Black Reconstruction in America.”
- Anna Julia Cooper (1892): “A Voice from the South.” & “Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutions.”

Optional Readings

- Condorcet (1781): “Reflections on Negro Slavery.”
- If not familiar with the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 consider reading for example the Wikipedia Article.

Unit 13: What needs to be done?

Required Readings

- Marx (1852): “18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.”
- Marx & Engels (1848): “The Communist Manifesto.”
- Durkheim (1898-1900): “Professional Ethics and Civic Morals.”
- Du Bois (1899): “The Philadelphia Negro.”

Unit 14: Is Classical Theory Classic and Relevant Today? – Should Social Science Aspire to Change the World?

** Methods assignment due by end of 11th of December. **

This week we will wrap up, discuss any remaining questions and issues, and “debate” questions around the canon and role of sociology in social change and emancipation.

Required Readings

- Marx (1845): “Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach.”
- Wright (2010): *The Tasks of Emancipatory Social Science* from “Envisioning Real Utopias.”
- Romero (2020): “Sociology Engaged in Social Justice.”

Optional Readings

- Burawoy (2004): “For Public Sociology.”
- Bonilla-Silva (2018): “Feeling Race: Theorizing the Racial Economy of Emotions.”

** There is no final exam for this course. The revised writing assignment is due before end of Dec 14th. **

** The above syllabus is subject to change. Students will be alerted to any alterations. **