

Micro Sociological Theory

Code: 101125
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500262 Sociology	OB	2	2

Contact

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: spanish (spa)
Some groups entirely in English: No
Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes
Some groups entirely in Spanish: Yes

Teachers

Jordi Tena Sanchez

Prerequisites

The course requires to have passed "Fonaments de Sociologia". Besides, it is strongly recommended to have passed "Pensament Sociològic Contemporani". The course assumes the students have basic knowledge of the classics of sociology and the main schools of sociological thought in the XXth century.

Objectives and Contextualisation

As revealed by the emphasis on learning skills, sociological theory should significantly contribute to built students' basic conceptual map. To do so, the course articulates two different pedagogical criteria: it introduces the main current theoretical contributions to sociology, and it does so in systematic way, given that the historical aspects have already been studied in "Fonaments de Sociologia" and in "Pensament Sociològic Contemporani".

Competences

- Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects, interpretations and historical context.
- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.
- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

Learning Outcomes

1. Comparing theoretical approaches about the macro- and micro- sociological phenomena.
2. Defining the main micro and macro sociological concepts.
3. Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
4. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
5. Developing self-learning strategies.
6. Expressing the debates about these approaches in several moments.
7. Identifying the use of these approaches in different moments of the sociological theory.
8. Recognising the sociological implications of several intellectual debates (about the subject, action, social order, language, etc.).
9. Relating their usage and criticism in the historical context in which they emerged.
10. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
11. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
12. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

Content

1. Introduction to systematic sociological theory.
2. Explanation, social mechanisms, and the theory of social action.
3. Individualism and emergence.
4. Rational choice theory.
5. Game theory in the social sciences.
6. Evolutionary game theory and social cooperation.
7. Coordination and social conventions.
8. Social trust and signaling theory.
9. Theories of collective action.
10. Analytical Marxism.
11. Theory of ordinary rationality.
12. Theories of bounded rationality, heuristics, and biases.
13. Communicative and deliberative rationality.
14. Motivational pluralism.

Methodology

The course is based on four types of activities:

- 1) Lectures that will present the contents in class counting on students' active and critical participation.
- 2) Practical exercises and other activities that will allow students to apply the theories studied in class.
- 3) Individual tuition.
- 4) Students' autonomous activities: reading list.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Seminars	38	1.52	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9

Theoretical classes	15	0.6	11, 2, 3, 5, 4, 12, 10
Type: Supervised			
Individual tuition	15	0.6	11, 2, 12
Type: Autonomous			
Student's work	70	2.8	11, 1, 2, 3, 5, 4, 6, 12, 7, 8, 9, 10

Assessment

The assessment will be based on three kinds of exercises:

- 1) A final exam.
- 2) Three practical exercises. They will be related to the contents studied in class. The exercises will be described and scheduled during the course in specific documents.
- 3) An exercise based on the compulsory readings where students will have to show they have done the readings and have assimilated the contents.

Remarks:

- To pass the course it is necessary to obtain a minimum average grade of 5.
- The failure to carry out any of the evaluation exercises (even if an average grade of 5 or higher is obtained), will be considered as "non-evaluable".
- Students who do not pass the continuous assessment (because they haven't obtained a minimum average grade of 5 and/or because they haven't done some of the exercises), have the right to reassessment. Specifically:
 - A student who doesn't pass the exam, will have to do another exam with the same characteristics.
 - A student who doesn't pass the exercise based on the compulsory readings, will have to do another exercise with the same characteristics.
 - A student who doesn't pass the practical exercises, will have to do an specific exercise that will be determined at the time.
- To pass the re-evaluation, it is mandatory to do the exercises corresponding to all non-passed parts.
- Students who pass the re-evaluation will obtain a final grade of 5.
- The assessment exercises must be done or delivered on the scheduled day. As for presential exercises, only those students who provide a medical document certifying that, on the sheduled day, they weren't in fit state to attend, or who certify any other reason that the professor considers *force majeure*, will be allowed to dothis exercise in other moment. In principle, working does not give the right to do the exercises in a different moment, unless the student properly certifies that his presence at work on that day and at that time was indispensable.
- Cheating will imply failing the course with a zero. It is forbidden to use electronic devices (such as mobiles) during the presential exercises, and having them switched on will be considered as cheating.

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Exam	50	4	0.16	11, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
Exercise on compulsory readings	35	3	0.12	1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 7, 8, 10

Bibliography

(The list of compulsory readings will be available at Moodle and/or at the copy center).

1. Basic general text

Aguiar, Fernando (1990): "La lógica de la cooperación", *Zona Abierta* nº 54/55.

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Boudon, Raymond (2003). *Raison, bonnes raisons*. Paris, PUF.

Boudon, Raymond (2009). *La racionalidad en las ciencias sociales*. Buenos Aires, Nueva Visión, 2010.

Coleman, James (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, The Belknap Press.

Elster, Jon (2007). *Explaining Social Behaviour*. New York, Cambridge University Press. (traducción al español en Gedisa, 2010, *La explicación del comportamiento social*).

Goldthorpe, John H. (2007). *De la sociología: números, narrativas e integración de la investigación y la teoría*. Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2010.

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Hedström, Peter y Swedberg, Richard (eds.) (1998). *Social Mechanisms. An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hedström, Peter y Bearman, Peter (eds.) (2009). *The Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Marí-Klose, P. (2000). *Elección racional*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Noguera, José A. (ed.) (2010). *Teoría sociológica analítica*. Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Sánchez-Cuenca, I. (2004). *Teoría de juegos*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

2. Complementary references by topic

Rational choice and game theory

Becker, Gary (1976). *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. Chicago, Chicago University Press.

Becker, Gary (1987). *Tratado sobre la familia*. Madrid, Alianza.

Binmore, Ken (2007). *La teoría de juegos. Una breve introducción*. Madrid, Alianza, 2009.

Davis, Morton B. (1990). *Introducción a la teoría de juegos*. Madrid, Alianza.

Elster, Jon (ed.). (1986). *Rational Choice*. New York, New York University Press.

Marí-Klose, P. (2000). *Elección racional*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Mero, Laszlo (2001). *Los azares de la razón: fragilidad humana, cálculos morales y teoría de juegos*. Barcelona, Paidós.

Ovejero, F. (1993). "Teoría, juegos y método", *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, 5: 5-33.

Poundstone, William (1995). *El dilema del prisionero. John von Neumann, la teoría de juegos y la bomba*. Madrid, Alianza.

Resnik, Michael D. (1987). *Elecciones. Una introducción a la teoría de la decisión*. Barcelona, Gedisa, 1998.

Rivera, Juan Antonio (2000). *El gobierno de la fortuna: el poder del azar en la historia y los asuntos humanos*. Barcelona, Crítica.

Sánchez-Cuenca, I. (2004). *Teoría de juegos*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Schelling, Thomas (1978). *Micromotivos y macroconducta*. México, FCE, 1989.

Schick, Frederic (1997). *Hacer elecciones*. Barcelona, Gedisa, 2000.

Methodological individualism

Elster, Jon (1982): "Marxismo, funcionalismo y teoría de juegos. Alegato en favor del individualismo metodológico", *Zona abierta* nº 33 (1984).

Levine, Andrew; Sober, Elliot y Wright, Olin E. (1986-1987). "Marxismo e individualismo metodológico", *Zona abierta*, nº 41-42.

Noguera, José Antonio (2003). "¿Quién teme al individualismo metodológico? Un análisis de sus implicaciones para la teoría social", *Papers. Revista de Sociología*, nº 69.

Trust and signaling theory

Aguiar, Fernando (1993). "Confianza y racionalidad", en E. L. Espinoza y J. Rodríguez (eds.), *Problemas de teoría social contemporánea*. Madrid: CIS.

Pentland, Alex (2010). *Señales honestas. El lenguaje que gobierna el mundo*. Barcelona, Milrazones, 2008.

Collective action theory

Aguiar, Fernando (1990): "La lógica de la cooperación", *Zona Abierta* nº 54/55.

Hardin, Russell (1982). *Collective Action*. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.

Hirschman, Albert O. (1970). *Salida, voz y lealtad*. México, FCE, 1977.

Hirschman, Albert O. (1982). *Interés privado y acción pública*. México, FondodeCultura Económica, 1986.

Olson, Mancur (1965). *La lógica de la acción colectiva*. México, Limusa, 1992.

Olson, Mancur (1982). *Auge y decadencia de las naciones*. Barcelona, Ariel, 1986.

Ovejero, Félix (1989). *Intereses de todos, acciones de cada uno*. Madrid, Siglo XXI.

Taylor, Michael (1987). *Anarchy and cooperation*. Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Revista Internacional de Sociología nº 46 (2007) (monográfico sobre acción colectiva).

Zona Abierta nº 54/55 (1990) (monográfico sobre acción colectiva).

Evolutionary game theory

Axelrod, Robert (1984). *La evolución de la cooperación: el dilema del prisionero y la teoría de juegos*. Madrid, Alianza, 1996.

Axelrod, Robert (1986). *La complejidad de la cooperación*. Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003.

Linares, Francisco (2007). "El problema de la emergencia de normas sociales en la acción colectiva", *Revista Internacional de Sociología* nº 46.

Tomasello, Michael y otros (2009). *¿Por qué cooperamos?* Madrid, Katz, 2010.

Bounded rationality and cognitive rationality

Ariely, Dan (2008). *Las trampas del deseo*. Barcelona, Ariel.

Boudon, Raymond (1995). *Le Juste et le vrai: études sur l'objectivité des valeurs et de la connaissance*. París, Fayard.

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Cruz, Manuel (coord.) (1997). *Acción humana*. Barcelona, Ariel.

Elster, Jon (1979). *Ulises y las sirenas*. México, FCE, 1980.

Elster, Jon (1984). *Uvas amargas. Estudios sobre la subversión de la racionalidad*. Barcelona, Península, 1990.

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Lizón, Ángeles (2000). "Del «efecto Simmel» y la autopersuasión: la teoría cognitivista de las creencias de R. Boudon", *Papers. Revista de Sociología*, nº 62.

Gigerenzer, Gerd (2007). *Decisiones instintivas. La inteligencia del inconsciente*. Barcelona, Ariel, 2008.

Gilovich, Thomas (2009). *Convencidos pero equivocados*. Barcelona, Milrazones.

Robles, José Manuel (2005). "Racionalidad acotada: heurísticos y acción individual", *Theoria*, vol. 14, nº 1, pp. 37-46.

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Simon, Herbert (1986), "De la racionalidad sustantiva a la procesal", en Hahn, Frank y Martin Hollis, *Filosofía y teoría económica*, FCE, México, pp. 130-171.

Social norms

Aguiar, Fernando y De Francisco, Andrés (2003): "Identidad, normas e intereses", *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 103: 9-27.

Bicchieri, Cristina (2006). *The Grammar of Society. The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

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Analytical marxism

Cohen, Gerald A. (1982). "Réplica a «Marxismo, funcionalismo y teoría de juegos» de Elster", en *Zona Abierta* nº 33 (1984).

Domènech, Antoni (1991): "Elster y las limitaciones de la racionalidad", *Arbor* CXL, nº 550 (octubre).

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