

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.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

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 dothisexercise 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 |
| Practical exercises | 15 | 5 | 0.2 | 11, 1, 2, 3, 5, 4, 6, 12, 10 |

Bibliography

1. Compulsory readings (included as an orientation: each academic year they may partially vary according to academic criteria; they will be available for students at the start of the semester).

Lago, Ignacio (2008): "¿Qué significa explicar en ciencias sociales?", en *La lógica de la explicación en ciencias sociales*. Madrid, Alianza, pp. 53-74.

Noguera, José A. (2003): "¿Quién teme al individualismo metodológico? Un análisis de sus implicaciones para la teoría social", *Papers. Revista de Sociologia*, nº 69, pp. 101-131.

<https://papers.uab.cat/article/view/v69-noguera>

Hollis, Martin (1994): "Juegos con agentes racionales", en *Filosofía de las ciencias sociales*. Barcelona, Ariel, 1998, pp. 127-155.

Axelrod, Robert (1984): "El éxito de toma y daca en los torneos computerizados", en *La evolución de la cooperación*. Madrid, Alianza, 1986.

Herreros, Francisco (2008): "Confianza, elección racional y teoría de juegos", en F. Aguiar, J. Barragán y N. Lara (coords.): *Economía, Sociedad y Teoría de Juegos*. Madrid, McGraw Hill, pp. 175-187.

Aguiar, Fernando (1991): "La lógica de la cooperación", en AA.VV., *Intereses individuales y acción colectiva*. Madrid, Editorial Pablo Iglesias, pp. 1-41.

Noguera, José A. y Tena-Sánchez, Jordi (2013): "Racionalitat i irracionalitat en la conducta humana", en *Jon Elster. Un teòric social analític*. Barcelona, UOC, pp. 44-59.

Boudon, R. (2006): "El *homo sociologicus*. Ni idiota racional ni irracional", en Noguera, J.A. (ed.) (2010): *Teoría Sociológica Analítica*. Madrid, CIS, pp. 173-195.

Noguera, José A. (2007): "Racionalidad y deliberación en la acción colectiva", *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, vol. 46, pp. 107-129.

<https://revintsociologia.revistas.csic.es/index.php/revintsociologia/article/view/6>

Thaler, Richard H. y Sunstein, Cass R. (2008): "Sesgos y errores", en *Un pequeño empujón*. Madrid, Taurus, 2009.

2. Reference texts

Basic level

Linares, Francisco (2018). *Sociología y teoría social analíticas*. Madrid, Alianza.

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

Advanced level

Elster, Jon (2007). *La explicación del comportamiento social*. Barcelona, Gedisa, 2010.

Goldthorpe, John (2016). *La sociología como ciencia de la población*. Madrid, Alianza, 2017.

Van Tubergen, Frank (2020). *Introduction to Sociology*. London, Routledge.

3. Recommended supplementary references by topic

Explanation and social mechanisms

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

Hedström, Peter (2005). *Dissecting the Social. On the Principles of Analytical Sociology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

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

Rational choice and game theory

Aguiar, Fernando; Criado, Henar y Herreros, Francisco (2003). "Sociología y elección racional", en Salvador Giner (ed.), *Teoría Sociológica Moderna*. Barcelona, Ariel.

Aguiar, Fernando; Barragán, Julia y Lara, Nelson (coords.) (2008). *Economía, Sociedad y Teoría de Juegos*. Madrid, McGraw-Hill.

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

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

Evolutionary game theory and social cooperation

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.

Trust and signaling

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

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

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

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

<https://revintsociologia.revistas.csic.es/index.php/revintsociologia/article/view/7>

Analytical Marxism

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

Bounded rationality, cognitive rationality, heuristics and biases

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

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

Software

No specific software is required