

Macro Sociological Theory

Code: 101126
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Sociology	OB	3

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

It is recommended to have passed "Fonaments de Sociologia", "Pensament Sociològic Contemporani" and, specially, "Teoria Sociològica Micro". 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

- Applying the concepts and approaches of the sociological theory, specially the explanations of social inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups, to the implementation of public policies and to the resolution of conflict situations.
- 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.

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. Distinguishing the underlying social phenomena of specific policies or conflicts.
6. Expressing the debates about these approaches in several moments.

Content

1. Introduction to macrosocial phenomena.
2. Social structure and change: societies as complex adaptive systems.
3. Social groups and networks.
4. Social influence and diffusion of behaviour: basic mechanisms.
5. Power, inequalities, and social hierarchies: types and dynamics.
6. Social norms: concept, types, emergence, and compliance.
7. Social institutions and institutional design.
8. The future of social science.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Practical exercises: seminars, etc.	14	0.56	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Presentation and discussion of contents	42	1.68	1, 2, 3
Type: Supervised			
Individual tuition	14	0.56	1, 2, 4, 5
Type: Autonomous			
Reading texts	36	1.44	1, 2, 3
Study	16	0.64	1, 2, 4
Writing papers and exercises	21	0.84	1, 2, 3

The course is based on 4 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.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Compulsory readings based exercises	30%	3	0.12	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Exams	70%	4	0.16	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

The continuous evaluation will be based on five pieces of evidence:

- 1) Two partial exams on the subject matter and the compulsory readings (the first on October 31 and the second on December 14). (35% + 35% = 70%)
- 2) Three practical exercises during the course, related to the topics studied in class. The exercises will be described and scheduled throughout the course in specific documents. Orientatively, the first one will be due at the beginning of October, the second one at the end of October, and the third one at the beginning of December. (10% + 10% + 10% = 30%)

Observations:

- To pass the subject in the continuous assessment it will be necessary to obtain a minimum weighted average grade of five.
- All the assessed exercises will count for the average grade. If there is none, the grade will be "not assessed".
- The exams will be multiple choice tests.
- In case of not the continuous evaluation, it will be possible to opt for a single evaluation at the end of the semester through a final exam on the contents of the subject and the compulsory readings, which will take place on the day that will be determined in due time by the official exams calendar of the Faculty.
- The retake exam (both for the continuous and single assessment) will also take place on the day that will be determined in due time for retake in the official exams calendar of the Faculty.

Use of AI: Model 2 - Restricted Use: For this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively in support tasks, such as bibliographic or information searches, text correction or translations. The student must clearly identify which parts have been generated with this technology, specify the tools used and include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and the final result of the activity. The lack of transparency in the use of AI in this activity will be considered a lack of academic honesty and may lead to a partial or total penalty in the grade of the activity, or greater sanctions in serious cases.

Bibliography

1. Introduction to macrosocial phenomena.

Watts, Duncan (2011). "Preface: A Sociologist's Apology", in *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answer*. New York, Random House.

Goldthorpe, John (2016). "La sociología como ciencia de la población: la idea central", in *La sociología como ciencia de la población*. Madrid, Alianza, 2017.

2. Social structure and change: societies as complex adaptive systems.

Lindblom, Charles (2000). "La coordinación de la sociedad", in *El sistema de mercado*. Madrid, Alianza, 2002.

3. Social groups and networks.

Granovetter, Mark (1973). "La fuerza de los vínculos débiles", *Política y Sociedad*, 33 (2000).

4. Social influence and diffusion of behaviour: basic mechanisms.

Coleman, James; Katz, Eliu & Menzel, Herbert (1957). "La difusión de una innovación entre los médicos", in Félix Requena (ed.): *Ánalisis de redes sociales. Orígenes, teorías y aplicaciones*. Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), 2003.

5. Power, inequalities, and social hierarchies: types and dynamics.

Stinchcombe, Arthur L. (1968). "La conceptualización de los fenómenos de poder" (fragment), in *La construcción de teorías sociales*. Buenos Aires, Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1970.

Wright, Erik O. (2016). "Two Approaches to Inequality and Their Normative Implications", *Items. Insights from the Social Sciences*. July 5 (

<https://items.ssrc.org/what-is-inequality/two-approaches-to-inequality-and-their-normative-implications/>).

Wright, Erik O. (2012). "In Defense of Genderlessness", in Gosseries, Axel & Vanderborght, Yannick (eds.): *Arguing about justice: essays for Philippe van Parijs*. Louvain (Bélgica): Presses Universitaires de Louvain.

6. Social norms: concept, types, emergence, and compliance.

Bicchieri, Cristina. (2016). "Diagnosing Norms", in *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms*. New York, Oxford University Press.

7. Social institutions and institutional design.

Goodin, Robert E. (1996). "Las instituciones y su diseño", in Robert E. Goodin (comp.), *Teoría del diseño institucional*. Barcelona, Gedisa, 2003.

8. The future of social science.

Elster, Jon (2007). "Conclusión: ¿Es posible la ciencia social?" in *La explicación del comportamiento social*. Barcelona, Gedisa, 2010.

REFERENCE TEXTS

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

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

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

COMPLEMENTARY READINGS

Bicchieri, Cristina (2016). *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms*. New York, Oxford University Press.

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

Coleman, James S. (1990). *Fundamentos de teoría social*. Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS).

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

Goodin, Robert E. (comp.) (1996). *Teoría del diseño institucional*. Barcleona, Gedisa, 2003.

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

Requena, Félix (ed.) (2003). *Ánalisis de redes sociales. Orígenes, teorías y aplicaciones*. Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS).

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

Stinchcombe, Arthur L. (1968). *La construcción de teorías sociales*. Buenos Aires, Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1970.

Watts, Duncan (2011). *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answer*. New York, Random House.

Software

It does not apply.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(SEM) Seminars	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(SEM) Seminars	51	Catalan	first semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	51	Catalan	first semester	afternoon