

Degree	Type	Year
Sociology	OB	2

Contact

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Teachers

Maria Teresa Sorde Marti

Teaching groups languages

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

Prerequisites

We strongly recommend to have passed the first grade course on "Fonaments de la Sociologia", and to have a basic knowledge of classical sociological theory.

Objectives and Contextualisation

Sociological theory must significantly contribute to outlining the basic conceptual map for sociology students and offer tools that enable them to understand and critically analyze contemporary reality.

In the course Contemporary Sociological Thought, we study the most significant contributions to contemporary social theory, placing them in their social, political, and cultural contexts. The guiding thread of the course is the presentation of the most relevant theoretical currents of the 20th century, including functionalism, structuralism, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, neo-Marxism, and postmodernism, among others.

To convey the complexity of contemporary sociological thought, the course combines an explanation of the theories with a depiction of the historical-intellectual climate of the period and biographical notes. At the same time, the course seminars will encourage reflexivity by connecting contemporary sociological thought to a critical analysis of the contemporary moment. The aim is to think creatively about the relevance of 20th-century sociological thought today and to provide theoretical depth to our understanding of the present.

Furthermore, we will develop a critical reflection with a gender perspective on the theoretical production in sociology in the 20th century, incorporating the viewpoints of contemporary women authors who reflect on these issues.

Thus, the aim of the course is for students to acquire the ability to situate, understand, and relate the main theoretical contributions of contemporary sociological thought, doing so with rigor, reflexivity, and a critical perspective.

Competences

- Analysing the problems arising from the implementation of public policies and conflict situations by recognising the complexity of the social phenomena and political decisions affecting democracy, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.
- 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.
- 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. Expressing the debates about these approaches in several moments.
5. Rearranging the different meanings of the problems derived from the application of public policies and conflict situations.
6. Relating their usage and criticism in the historical context in which they emerged.
7. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
8. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
9. 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.
10. Using the approaches of sociology in order to observe the effect of these policies or the outcome of these conflicts.

Content

The course program is structured through the following four blocks:

0. Introduction to Contemporary Sociological Thinking

- 0.1. Theorizing in the twentieth century: historical, political, and ethical implications.
- 0.2. Classics and contemporaries: similarities and differences.
- 0.3. Intellectual portraits: biographies, gender, and ethnicity.

1. Functionalism

- 1.1. Parsons: from the theory of action to system theory.
- 1.2. Merton: the paradigm of functional analysis.
- 1.3. The crisis of functionalism and its causes.

2. Hermeneutic and Comprehensive Theories

- 2.1. The Chicago School: Jane Addams, Thomas, Mead, and Goffman.
- 2.2. Sociophenomenology: Schütz, Berger, and Luckmann.
- 2.3. Ethnomethodology: Garfinkel.

3. Neomarxism, Critical Theory, and Modernity

- 3.1. Marxism after Marx: an introduction.
- 3.2. Reflections on a post-Holocaust world: the Frankfurt School.
- 3.3. Hannah Arendt and the human condition.
- 3.4. About power: Mills, Elias, Foucault, and Bourdieu.
- 3.5. Beyond modernity? The postmodern debate.

4. Understanding Contemporary Societies: Current Theories

- 4.1. Eva Illouz and the making of emotional capitalism.
- 4.2. Boundaries and recognition with Michèle Lamont.
- 4.3. An accelerated world (Hartmut Rosa).
- 4.4. Ideas for thinking about the present and the future.

In parallel to the regular program, the course includes a set of three lab sessions that revolve around the idea of power, obedience, and social change. They are as follows:

a) Power, Domination, and Social Order: Why Do We Obey?

This session consists of reflecting on the processes of obedience and the factors that lead to it. Reflection will be encouraged through movie fragments such as "The Experiment" and "The Wave," and will include the writing of a reflective essay.

b) Utopia, Collective Representations, and Social Order: The Dangers of Dreaming the Future

This session involves watching Margarethe Von Trotta's film "Hannah Arendt," related to the book "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil," followed by writing an essay. The aim is to reflect on the processes of collective obedience and the construction of totalitarian regimes.

c) Power, Domination, and Social Order: A Critical Look at the Present

This session involves watching the movie "La Granja de el Pas" and conducting an essay on the construction and resistance processes of the social order. The goal is to reflect on the concepts of hegemony, counter-hegemony, and the possibilities of social transformation.

The specific way in which the course contents are presented can be adapted and modified according to the characteristics of each course, as well as the recommended readings.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	43	1.72	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10
Type: Supervised			

Essays and Lab	2	0.08	8, 3, 9, 6, 7
Type: Autonomous			
Independent learning	50	2	8, 1, 2, 3, 9, 6, 5, 7, 10

Th

The course is structured around four types of activities:

1. Lectures
Presentation of the program content by the teacher, with participation and critical discussion by the students.
2. Practices
Activities such as text reading seminars, film viewings and discussions, and exercises for the practical application of theory, among other activities.
3. Tutorials
One-on-one or small group sessions outside the classroom.
4. Autonomous Activities
Independent work by students, including reading texts, writing essays, and completing exercises

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

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Essays	40	30	1.2	8, 3, 4, 9, 5, 7, 10
Exam	50	5	0.2	1, 2, 6, 10
Participation and attendance	10	20	0.8	8, 1, 2, 4, 7

The assessment consists of the following evidences:

- Final exam. It accounts for 50% of the final grade, and students must obtain a minimum score of 4.75 in order to average their final mark. The final exam will consist of two equally weighted parts. One part will be based on memorization, where students must demonstrate they have acquired the basic knowledge of the course. The second part may be completed with supplementary materials (notes, books) and will take the form of an essay and critical reflection. Both parts of the exam must be passed to calculate the average. Students must show that they have properly understood and assimilated the core course content and are able to argue theoretical positions rigorously.
- Practical activities and class participation (50%): Includes two practical assignments (to be chosen from three different options), as well as mandatory attendance and participation in class and in the seminars set by each lecturer.

It will be considered that the person has a "Non-Presented" if he has not done the exam.

Single assessment: the single assessment will consist of a final exam, and two essays. There will be the possibility to retake the exam but not to submit the essays again.

Regarding AI, this course adopts a restricted-use policy, which means that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are only allowed for support tasks such as bibliographic or information searches, text correction, translations, or other activities explicitly announced in class and in the course materials. Students must clearly identify which parts have been generated with these technologies, specify the tools used, and reflect on their implications.

Plagiarism and other irregularities. In accordance with academic regulations, any irregularity that could lead to a significant change in the grade of an assessment task will result in that task being graded as 0. If multiple irregularities occur across the assessment tasks of the same course, the final grade for that course will be 0.

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Software

All the necessary materials for the course will be uploaded to the moodle site of the course. If necessary, teams will be used for online teaching.

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