



Course information 2018–19

SC2163 Sociological theory and analysis

This course covers a range of sociological theory from its roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth century scientific revolutions and the Enlightenment through to some of the latest developments. It looks at a number of the most important developments in the understanding of how societies operate. It makes links between theoretical understandings of society and their social, economic and political context. It also looks at how an analysis of social formations is linked to theoretical understandings of the nature of social processes.

Prerequisite

If taken as part of a BSc degree, courses which must be passed before this course may be attempted:

SC1179 Contemporary sociology in a global age or
SC1021 Principles of sociology.

Aims and objectives

The objectives specifically include:

- To examine the development of the main intellectual trends of sociological theory to the present day and to introduce you to the types of analysis that are integral to them.
- To enable students to recognise and understand the key problems that sociological theorists have addressed in the formulation of their theories.
- To examine the relationship between sociological theory and empirical research and other forms of analysis in sociology.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour unseen written examination.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to:

- ✓ recognise, describe and discuss a wide range of sociological theories
- ✓ discuss the importance of theory to sociological research
- ✓ outline and discuss the way core issues continue to inform the production of sociological theory
- ✓ discuss the ways that social, political, and economic change prompts revisions and new directions in theoretical understandings
- ✓ explain the links between sociological theory and sociological analysis.

Essential reading

For full details please refer to the reading list.

- Callinicos, A. *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*. (Cambridge: Polity Press)
- Cahoun, C. et al (eds) *Classical Sociological Theory*. (Oxford: Blackwell)
- Cahoun, C. et al (eds) *Contemporary Sociological Theory*. (Oxford: Blackwell)

Students should consult the appropriate *EMFSS Programme Regulations*, which are reviewed on an annual basis. The *Regulations* provide information on the availability of a course, where it can be placed on your programme's structure, and details of co-requisites and prerequisites.

Syllabus

This is a description of the material to be examined. On registration, students will receive a detailed subject guide which provides a framework for covering the topics in the syllabus and directions to the essential reading

The 'Classical' tradition: The emergence of social theory in the philosophy of the Enlightenment and its development through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Weber and in the emerging discipline of sociology.

Twentieth century developments: The development and expansion of sociological theory in functionalism and structural functionalism social action theory, symbolic interactionism, critical theory and the Frankfurt School particularly in the works of Parsons, Mead, Garfinkel, Goffman, Adorno and Horkheimer, Habermas, Bourdieu, Giddens.

New directions: The impact of post-structuralist and postmodernist ideas and the consequences of the 'cultural turn' in sociological thought along with new directions in sociological theory prompted by the intensification of processes of globalisation and capitalisation. Attention will be given to contemporary social thought particularly in the work of Foucault, Lash and Urry, Castells, and Hardt and Negri.