

Course Title	Introduction to Sociology LAS 105	Instructor	Fabio BOLZONAR
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Class Style	Lecture	Office Hours	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> period (senior theses students) Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> period (all students) Or by appointment (please send an email to request an appointment)
Track		Mode of Instruction	Solo/team
Credits	2	Allocated Year	Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> year
Active Learning	Category 2: 3 Category 3: 2, 3, 4 Category 4: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10	Compulsory or Elective	
Course Overview	<p>This course is designed to introduce students to the major theories, concepts, and pieces of research in classical sociology. What is society? How did the early social scientists understand the dramatic transformations provoked by capitalism? How did they conceive the organization of the increasingly complex modern societies? The course considers these questions and discusses other related topics. The course is composed of two modules. The first module presents the 'classical' sociological theories, notably those elaborated by the 'founding fathers' of sociology, (i.e., Comte, de Tocqueville, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim). The second module focuses on several issues and controversies (i.e., social stratification, social mobility, gender and sexuality, and race) that had great salience in the works of the early sociologists and have an enduring importance for understanding contemporary societies. The course instructor explains theoretical and empirical works, reviews social research methods and, through an active learning approach, stimulates students to think critically about social problems.</p>		
Course Objectives	<p>The intended learning outcomes of this course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the major classical sociological theories;</li> <li>• Reading, comprehending, and interpreting academic publications;</li> <li>• Strengthening research skills;</li> <li>• Enhancing communication skills in English;</li> <li>• Applying sociological theories to interpret social reality;</li> <li>• Improving the ability to think analytically and critically.</li> </ul>		
Prerequisite	This introductory course is open to all students and does not have any prerequisites.		
Course Schedule	No	Contents	Homework
	1	<p><b>Introduction to the Course</b> <i>What is Sociology?</i></p> <p>The first part of this lecture explains the course structure, the work expected by each student, and the grading system. The second part discusses what sociology is and what 'thinking sociologically' means.</p>	Reading for the next class.

	2	<p><b>Module 1: Theoretical Perspectives</b></p> <p><i>August Comte: The Birth of Social Science</i></p> <p>Comte was one of the early thinkers who recognized the importance of a rigorous analysis of societies founded on a scientific basis. This lecture reviews the basic concepts of Comte's positivism that laid down the foundations of sociology as an autonomous social science.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material.</p> <p>Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.</p>
	3	<p><i>Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy in America</i></p> <p><i>Short Reflection 1 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>Even though de Tocqueville's book <i>Democracy in America</i> was published in 1835, its considerations on the role played by civil society, liberalism, women, and religion are still a source of inspiration for those who wish to understand modern societies. This lecture introduces and discusses the major ideas of <i>Democracy in America</i>.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material.</p> <p>Preparing questions to raise in class.</p>
	4	<p><i>Karl Marx: Alienation and Exploitation</i></p> <p>Marx elaborated one of the most insightful analyses of capitalism and its economic and social consequences. This lecture explains the different dimensions of workers' exploitation and alienation conceptualized by Marx and debates if Marx's claims are useful to interpret the current transformations of our capitalist world system.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material.</p> <p>Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.</p>
	5	<p><i>Émile Durkheim: A Functionalist Theory of Society</i></p> <p><i>Short Reflection 2 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>Understanding the complexity of modern societies is a central aim of Durkheim's social theory. This lecture explains how this French sociologist understood the social structures and interactions that characterize modern societies.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material.</p> <p>Preparing questions to raise in class.</p>
	6	<p><i>Max Weber: The Religious Foundations of Capitalism</i></p> <p>Capitalism has arguably been one of the major forces that have shaped modern societies. This lecture debates the social and cultural foundations of capitalism through a discussion of Weber's theory of capitalism.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material.</p> <p>Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.</p>
	7	<p><i>Midterm Exam</i></p>	<p>Studying for the exam.</p>
	8	<p><b>Module 2: Issues, Controversies, and Debates</b></p> <p><i>Class and Social Stratification</i></p> <p><i>Short Reflection 3 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>This lecture compares the concept of class in Marx and Weber, discusses how these two sociologists understood the linkage between class and other dimensions of social life and questions the relevance of the concepts of class elaborated by these two sociologists have some relevance in contemporary societies. The lecture also debates to what extent the social class of our family influences our life chances.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material.</p> <p>Preparing questions to raise in class.</p>

	9	<p><i>Power</i></p> <p>The lecture covers the different dimensions of the concept of power conceived by Weber, questions their relevance for understanding social relationships in contemporary societies, and debates the role played by likely forms of counter-power.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.</p>
	10	<p><i>The Family and Its Evolution</i> <i>Short Reflection 4 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>The family is arguably one of the most influential social institutions in every society through which individuals are socialized. However, the structure and the role of the family diverge in different social contexts and have changed over time. Building on the conceptualizations of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, this lecture debates what a family is and outlines its economic and social role.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.</p>
	11	<p><i>Gender and Sexuality</i></p> <p>The early social scientists were aware of how societies were based on unequal power relations between men and women. This class discusses how classical sociological theories define patriarchy, understand gender discrimination, and explain how patriarchy and gender discrimination affect the lives of women and sexual minorities.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.</p>
	12	<p><i>Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism</i> <i>Short Reflection 5 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>Biologically grounded personal features, notably skin colour, have been used to 'construct' racial and ethnic identities that justified discriminatory policies if not racist attitudes. This class explains how the classical sociological theories understood race and ethnicity, and how they considered their linkages with nationalism.</p>	<p>Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.</p>
	13	<p><b>Conclusion</b> <i>Student Presentation 1</i></p> <p>This class is devoted to student presentations.</p>	<p>Studying for the presentation and class discussion.</p>
	14	<p><i>Student Presentation 2 and Wrap up</i></p> <p>This class is devoted to student presentations.</p>	<p>Studying for the presentation and class discussion.</p>
	15	<p><i>Wrap Up</i></p> <p>This class summarizes and reviews what we have learnt from 'thinking sociologically' in this course. Students will also have the opportunity to raise further questions about the class material and the course instructor will provide some advice for the final assignment.</p>	<p>Debate and course overview.</p>
		<p><i>Final Exam</i></p>	<p>Studying for the final exam.</p>

Grading	<p>Class Participation: 30 %</p> <p>Students are expected to engage in discussions. Participation will be evaluated on the basis of the contribution to collective learning. If a student does not feel comfortable speaking in class, she/he is encouraged to contact the course instructor to arrange an alternative way to participate in discussions. The course instructor would do his best to accommodate students' requests. Student presentations will be counted as extra participation.</p> <p>Midterm exam: 30%</p> <p>There will be a midterm exam related to the course material discussed in Module 1. This exam will be composed of several multiple choice and true/false quizzes and one open questions. Grades will be based on the understanding of the course material and the answers given by each student.</p> <p>Final exam: 40%</p> <p>There will be a final exam related to the course material discussed in Module 2. This exam will be composed of several multiple choice and true/false quizzes and three open questions. Grades will be based on the understanding of the course material and the answers given by each student.</p>
Textbooks	A detailed list of readings will be provided by the instructor on Moodle.
References	<p>A detailed list of references will be provided on Moodle.</p> <p><b>PODCASTS FOR REVIEWING RESEARCH METHODS</b></p> <p>Melissa Wilde on Conducting Comparative Historical Research, <a href="https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/melissa-wilde-on-conducting-C0lXrSVeH71/">https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/melissa-wilde-on-conducting-C0lXrSVeH71/</a></p> <p>Cheri Pascoe on Ethnographic Research, <a href="https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/cj-pascoe-on-ethnographic-GHRyE6XoNu3/">https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/cj-pascoe-on-ethnographic-GHRyE6XoNu3/</a></p> <p>Shamus Khan on Historical Data, <a href="https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/shamus-khan-on-historical-data-epKf-61bRCT/">https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/shamus-khan-on-historical-data-epKf-61bRCT/</a></p> <p>Vinnie Roscigno on Mixed Methods, <a href="https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/shamus-khan-on-historical-data-epKf-61bRCT/">https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/give-methods-a/shamus-khan-on-historical-data-epKf-61bRCT/</a></p> <p><b>MASS MEDIA AND NEWSPAPERS</b></p> <p>BBC (Society and Culture), <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01hp4k7">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01hp4k7</a></p> <p>The Financial Times (Japanese Society), <a href="https://www.ft.com/japanese-society">https://www.ft.com/japanese-society</a></p> <p>The Guardian (Society), <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/society">https://www.theguardian.com/society</a></p> <p>The Japan Times (Society), <a href="https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/japan/society/">https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/japan/society/</a></p> <p>The New York Times (Society), <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/society">https://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/society</a></p> <p>El País (Society), <a href="https://english.elpais.com/society/">https://english.elpais.com/society/</a></p>
NOTES	<p>Short reflections (max 150 words) aim to evaluate student understanding of the course material and participation. They are due two days before each class at the latest.</p> <p>Students with disabilities or special needs (including stress and anxiety problems) should talk to the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss likely arrangements to let them attend the course properly. Confidentiality will be granted to all students.</p> <p>Plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance. If students have any queries about plagiarism and the quotation style, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor.</p> <p>Artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini) for learning purposes should be used cautiously. Even though AI tools can explain complex concepts, organize workload efficiently, and enhance writing skills, they can also provide inaccurate information, lead to unintended plagiarism, and undermine the enhancement of critical thinking. If students wish to use AI tools, they are strongly encouraged to discuss this topic with the course instructor.</p>