

Introduction to Sociological Theory and Analysis of the Contemporary

BA Supplementary Subject in Sociology
Aarhus Universitet, Fall 2022

Lecturers:

Mikkel Thorup (MT) (coordinator), Lauritz Aastrup Munch (LAM), Andreas Beck Holm (ABH), Andreas Beyer Gregersen (ABG)

Time and place:

Tuesdays 15-18 in 1483/220

Thursdays 12-15 in 1451/225

NB: Changes may occur. For the current plan, see:
<https://timetable.au.dk/schedule>

Purpose of the course:

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to classical and modern sociology. Students learn to account for the main theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of sociological theory. The course also aims to develop the students' understanding of how classical and modern sociological theory can be used in current sociological analyses, thereby preparing the students to analyse current phenomena using sociological theory.

The course introduces the main areas of sociological theory from classical to modern and contemporary sociology. Key sociologists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Judith Butler are introduced. The course also focuses on complementing the theory with current research literature in order to show how sociological theories are used in recent sociological research. In other words, the course also aims to increase the students' methodological awareness.

The course provides a basic introduction to sociological theory, thereby informing the students of the development of sociology and its ongoing debate with its own traditions. This enables the students to gain a clear overview of the field of sociology, enabling them to identify important positions and carry out preliminary independent analyses using sociological theory. In this way, the course gives the students a solid grounding within sociology which enables them to work with specific sub-areas of sociology in the course entitled "Political and Economic Sociology". The course also constitutes a theoretical foundation for further study of in-depth, empirical sociological methods and

project work in the course entitled "**Sociological Methods and Analysis in Practice**".

Academic objectives:

In the evaluation of the students' performance, emphasis is placed on the extent to which the students are able to:

Knowledge:

- describe classical and modern sociological theories, including their development
- explain the most central contributions to sociology including their differences, similarities and connections.

Skills:

- analyse current issues using sociological theories
- reflect on the applicability, strengths and weaknesses of different methods of analysis
- compare and discuss sociological theories.

Competences:

- work independently with sociological issues and theories
- produce delimited written studies
- reflect on their own core subject from a sociological perspective.

Exam:

Take-home assignment

Form of co-examination: Internal co-examination

Assessment form: 7-point grading scale

Ordinary exam:

Lecture participation is a prerequisite for taking the exam, cf. Section 2.1 in the academic regulations.

The exam consists of a portfolio containing a number of assignments. The total length of the portfolio is: Max. 12 standard pages. The number of assignments as well as their form and length will be announced on Brightspace by the teacher at the start of the semester. The portfolio may include products. Depending on their length, and subject to the teacher's approval, these products can replace some of the standard pages in the portfolio.

It must be possible to carry out an individual assessment. So if some parts of the portfolio have been produced by a group, it must be stated clearly which parts each student is responsible for, and which parts the group as a whole is responsible for.

The complete portfolio must be handed in for assessment in the Digital Exam system by the date specified in the exam plan. Each student submits a portfolio.

Re-examination:

The exam consists of a portfolio that contains the same type and number of assignments as the ordinary exam. The total length of the portfolio is: Max. 12 standard pages. The number of assignments as well as their form and length will be announced on Brightspace by the teacher no later than at the end of the teaching. The portfolio may include products. Depending on their length, and subject to the teacher's approval, these products can replace some of the standard pages in the portfolio.

It must be possible to carry out an individual assessment. So if some parts of the portfolio have been produced by a group, it must be stated clearly which parts each student is responsible for, and which parts the group as a whole is responsible for.

The complete portfolio must be handed in for assessment in the Digital Exam system by the date specified in the exam plan. Each student submits a portfolio.

Lecture plan:

#/Date	Topic	Practical matters
1. (30/8)	MT Intro: What is sociology?	Information about course and exam
2. (1/9)	ABH Capitalism and alienation	
3. (6/8)	ABH Critique of Political Economy	
4. (8/9)	ABH Ideology Critique I	
5. (13/9)	ABH Ideology Critique II	
6. (15/9)	ABH Ideology Critique III	
7. (20/9)	LAM Anomie: Durkheim I	
8. (22/9)	LAM Anomie: Durkheim II	
9. (27/9)	LAM The Dynamics of Social Groups I	
10. (29/9)	LAM The Dynamics of Social Groups II	
11. (4/10)	LAM Power and Social Fields I	
12. (6/10)	LAM Power and Social Fields II	Midway evaluation (oral)
13. (11/10)	LAM System and Public Sphere I	
14. (13/10)	LAM System and Public Sphere II	
		Portfolio 1 (21/10)
15. (25/10)	ABG Gender and Body I	
16. (27/10)	ABG Gender and Body II	

17. (1/11)	LAM	Race I		
18. (3/11)	LAM	Race II		
19. (8/11)	ABG	Populism and Democracy		
20. (10/11)	MT	Power and Stratification I		
21. (15/11)	MT	Power and Stratification II		
22. (17/11)	MT	Precarity and Risk I		
23. (22/11)	MT	Precarity and Risk II	Portfolio 2 (18/11) Evaluation	(complete
questionnaire)				
24. (24/11)	MT	Sociology and an Analytical Praxis	Presentation of evaluation Portfolio 1-3 (15/12)	

1. Introduction: What is Sociology, what is Analysis of the Contemporary? (MT)

- Lars Geer Hammershøj, "Diagnosis of the times vs Description of Society", *Current Sociology Monograph*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2015, pp. 140-154
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 1
- C.W Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, Chapter 1

2. Capitalism and Alienation (I): Marx (ABH)

- Balibar, Etienne (2017): *The Philosophy of Marx*. London: Verso
- Marx, Karl (1977): *Early Writings*, pp. 345-375. London: Penguin Books / New Left Review
- Sennett, Richard (1998): *The Corrosion of Character*, pp. 15-75. London / New York: Norton & Company
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 2
- Case (see Brightspace)

3. Capitalism and Alienation (II): Marx (ABH)

- Marx, Karl (1976): *Capital. Volume 1*, pp. 283-306. London: Penguin Books
- Foster, Ryan (2008): "Corporate Social Responsibility and labour market discipline: contesting social reproduction in low-wage America". Pp. 117-138 in Taylor, Marcus (ed.): *Global Economy Contested. Power and conflict across the international division of labour*. London and New York: Routledge
- Case (see Brightspace)

4. Ideology Critique I: Marx and Althusser (ABH)

- Althusser, Louis: "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. Notes towards an Investigation". Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>
- Purtoft, Maria: "Too many humanities graduates, says industry". In *University Post* (University of Copenhagen), June 25, 2010.

5. Ideology Critique II: Žižek (ABH)

- Williams, Joan C.: "What So Many People Don't Get About the US Working Class". In *Harvard Business Review*, November 10, 2016.
- Žižek, Slavoj: "Introduction". In *Mapping Ideology*. London 1999: Verso. Pp. 1-33.
- Žižek, Slavoj: *Living in the End Times*. London 2011: Verso. pp. 181-243

6. Ideology Critique III: Boltanski and Chiapello (ABH)

- Boltanski, Luc and Chiapello, Eve: "1968: Crisis and Revival of Capitalism". In *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. London 2007. Pp. 167-215.
- Schwaller, Corinne: "Crisis, austerity and the normalisation of precarity in Spain – in academia and beyond". In *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*. Vol. 27, Special Issue 2, 2019. Pp. 33-47.

7. Anomie: Durkheim (LAM)

- Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970), p. 41-53, 217-228, 241-258, 270-272, 276, 297-300.
- Emile Durkheim, "The Subject-Matter of Sociology," in Anthony Giddens (ed.): *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1972), p. 63-68. (Available as e-book through KB).
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 3

8. Anomie: Durkheim (LAM)

- Anna S. Mueller & Seth Abrutyn, "Adolescents under Pressure: A New Durkheimian Framework for Understanding Adolescent Suicide in a Cohesive Community," *American Sociological Review*, October 2016, Vol. 81, No. 5, pp. 877-899
- Nick Charles, "Suicide is growing health crisis for African American youth", *nbcnews*, Oct. 8, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/suicide-mental-health-crisis-among-african-american-youth-n1063276>

9. The Dynamics of Social Groups: Simmel and Elias (LAM)

- *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated by Kurt Wolf, Free Press-Macmillan, New York, Part 2: "Quantitative aspects of the group", p. 118 – 169
- "The Sociology of Conflict: I" *American Journal of Sociology* 9 (1903): 490-525
- "The Sociology of the Meal" (reprinted in *Food and Foodways*, 1994, Vol. 5(4), pp. 333-351) with a preface by Michael Symons: "Simmel's gastronomic Sociology. An overlooked Essay"
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 4

10. The Dynamics of Social Groups: Simmel and Elias (LAM)

- Norbert Elias: "On the Eating of Meat" (reprinted in *Food and Foodways*, 1994, Vol. 5(4), pp. 333-351 with an introduction to Elias sociology by The G.H. Mead Project, Amsterdam, 2004

- Norbert Elias & Eric Dunning: (reprint) "Dynamics of Sportsgroups with special reference to Football", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 17, 4, p. 388 – 402, 1966

11. Power and Social Fields (I): Bourdieu (LAM)

- Bourdieu, Pierre, & Wacquant, Loïc J. D. 1992. *An invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 94-140.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1992. "Structures, *habitus*, practices", in Bourdieu, P.: *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press pp. 52-65.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. "Social space and symbolic power", in Bourdieu, P.: *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press pp. 123-139.

12. Power and Social Fields (II): Bourdieu (LAM)

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. "Principles of an Economic Anthropology", in Smelser, Neil J. & Swedberg, Richard (eds.): *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (2nd edition), Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 75-90.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. "The Field of the Firm: A Case Study", in Bourdieu, P.: *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Oxford: Polity Press, pp. 217-219.
- Loïc J. D. Wacquant. "The Pugilistic Point of View: How Boxers Think and Feel about Their Trade." *Theory and Society* 24, no. 4 (1995): 489-535. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/657882>.

13. System and Public Sphere: Habermas (LAM)

- Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, x.
- Jürgen Habermas, "Public Opinion–Opinion Publique–Öffentliche Meinung: On the Prehistory of the Phrase", pp. 89-102 and "A Sociological Attempt at Clarification", in *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, 1991), pp. 244-251.
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 6

14. System and Public Sphere: Habermas (LAM)

- Pierre Bourdieu: "Public Opinion Does Not Exist" in *Sociology in Question*, London: SAGE Publications, 1993, pp. 149-157
- Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", *Social Text* (1990), pp. 56-80
- James Ball, "Introduction" in *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World*, Biteback Publishing (2017), pp. 1-14
- Matthew D'Ancona, "Preface" and "Chapter One: who Cares?" in *Post-Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back*, Ebury Press (2017), pp. 1-23
- Ilan Zvi Baron, "Saving Politics: Introduction" in *How to save politics in a post-truth era*, Manchester University Press (2018), pp. 149-159

15. Gender and Body: Butler and Haraway (ABG)

- Haraway, Donna (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, pp. 149-155 (Brightspace)
- Butler, Judith (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 1-34 & 142-149 (Brightspace)
- Lausten, Carsten Bagge et al. *Social Theory: A Textbook*. London: Routledge, pp. 179-196

16. Gender and Body: Butler and Haraway (ABG)

- Aboim, Sofia (2020). "Gender in a Box? The Paradoxes of Recognition beyond the Gender Binary." *Politics and Governance* 8, no. 3: 231-241 (kb.dk)
- Jaworski, Katrina (2009). "Suicide and Gender: Reading Suicide Through Butler's Notion of Performativity". *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 76 (2003): 137-146 (kb.dk)
- Schlichter, Annette. "Do Voices Matter? Vocality, Materiality, Gender Performativity". *Body & Society* 17, no. 1 (2011): 31-52 (kb.dk)

17. Race: Du Bois (LAM)

- W.E.B. du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), p. 3-31, 670-675, 693-710.
- W.E.B. du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Penguin, 2012), p. 7-16.
- Voices of former slaves in the US: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZfcc21c6Uo&t=308s>

18. Race: Du Bois (LAM)

- José Itzigsohn & Karida Brown, "Sociology and the Theory of Double Consciousness: W.E.B. Du Bois's Phenomenology of Racialized Subjectivity," *Du Bois Review*, 12, 2, 2015, pp. 231- 248.
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, Article 8, (1989).
- Black Lives Matter, manifesto, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>

19. Populism and democracy: Weber & Laclau (ABG)

- Laclau, Ernesto (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London & New York: Verso Books, pp. 67-100 (Brightspace)
- Weber, Max (2009). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. London: Routledge, pp. 77-87 (Brightspace)
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory*, Chapter 12.

20. Power and Stratification (I): Foucault (MT)

- Michel Foucault, "Power, moral values and the intellectuals", <https://www.michaelbess.org/foucault-interview/>
- Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in James D. Faubion (ed.), Michel Foucault *Essential Works 3: Power*, London: Penguin 1994 [1982], pp. 326-348
- Michel Foucault, "Governmentality", in James D. Faubion (ed.), Michel Foucault: *Power - essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, vol. 3, London: Penguin Books 2000, pp. 201-222.

- Michel Foucault, Will to knowledge extract
- Campbell Jones: "The Subject Supposed to Recycle", *Philosophy Today*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2010, pp. 30-38 [access through Statsbiblioteket]
- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 4

21. Power and Stratification (II): Foucault (MT)

- Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the societies of control", *October*, vol. 59, 1992, pp. 3-7 [access through Statsbiblioteket]
- Anders Fogh Jensen, **The Project Society**, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press 2012, pp. 9-17, 30-42, 73-88

22. Precarity, Risk: Beck, Lorey, Butler, Bauman (MT)

- Ulrich Beck, *The Risk Society*, London: Sage 1992, pp. 19-50.
- Guy Standing, *The Precariat. The New Dangerous Class*, London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2011, pp. 1-25.
- Isabell Lorey, "Governmental Precarization", European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies Blog, 2011, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0811/lorey/en>
- Zygmunt Bauman, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, Cambridge: Polity 2005, pp. 23-42

23. Precarity, Risk: Beck, Lorey, Butler, Bauman (MT)

- Ronaldo Munck, "The Precariat: A View from the South", *Third World Quarterly*, 34, 5, 2013, pp. 747-762. (available through Statsbiblioteket)
- Klaus Ronneberger, "The Art of Not Becoming Accustomed to Anything", *Eurozine*, 2007, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-01-26-ronneberger-en.html>
- Paolo Virno & Max Henninger, "Post-Fordist Semblance", *SubStance*, issue. 112, vol. 36, no. 1, 2007, pp. 42-46 (available through Statsbiblioteket)

24. Sociology as an Analytic Praxis (MT)

- Carsten Bagge Laustsen et.al., *Social Theory: A Textbook*, Chapter 12