
COURSE GUIDE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY 1 SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND INTERDEPENDENCIES YEAR 2021-2022

COURSE NUMBER:	733101030Y
COURSE LOAD:	6 EC
ENTRY CONDITIONS:	N/A
PERIOD	Semester 1, block 1
LANGUAGE	English (lectures, tutorials) and Dutch (werkgroepen)

CONTENT

Sociological Theory 1 is the first in a series of four theory courses in the Sociology bachelor programme. In these courses, you will acquire a solid theoretical foundation that enables you to develop sociological imagination and argumentation. Theoretical knowledge is indispensable to formulate and answer questions in empirical sociological research. Learning sociological theory is comparable to learning a language; a language that opens up the scientific understanding of social life. Therefore, learning sociological theory is an important part of becoming a sociologist.

Sociological Theory 1 focuses on two central sociological concepts – social interactions and interdependencies – and how they developed over time. We will be discussing how Emile Durkheim's discoveries about rituals in 1912 helped to create Randall Collins' interaction ritual theory. Also, we will consider how Norbert Elias' 1939 ideas about emotion regulation relates to Erving Goffman's later insight in how self and society are entirely interwoven.

Some famous names were just dropped. However, this course is about great ideas rather than great thinkers. Across the globe, sociological theory courses are often grounded on the 'holy trinity' MDW: Marx, Durkheim, Weber. The merit of a canon is that sociologists everywhere around the world share a frame of reference, with a limited set of heroes that create focus. One of the adverse effects is that the focus is on knowledge from the past. To put it bluntly: while most religions rely on sacred texts and generate knowledge by looking backwards, most sciences, sociology among them, do so by looking forwards, trying out new ideas and novel methods. Another disadvantage is that the canon of great thinkers neglects that the production of sociological knowledge is a collective endeavour, not the work of single geniuses.

TEACHING METHODS

To connect students to the global sociological frame of reference, we discuss old influential texts in the tutorials. These require intensive reading and discussion. They have a lot to offer in terms of sociological insight, but we shall not treat them as sacred. The texts discussed in the tutorials are written by a very specific category of people: mostly Jewish European white males. In the lectures, we will consider the origins of the main ideas captured in these texts, why they are worth studying and their utility for 21st century global sociology, but we are also critical of their gendered and colonialist biases. Concerning the last issue, the lectures will show how a more diverse set of sociologists has been able to build upon and improve these earlier ideas.

We expect you to have studied the texts before the lectures and the tutorials. Also, we expect you to have prepared answers to the questions about the tutorial texts, which will be distributed each Friday prior to the tutorials. Given the difficulty of these texts, you are strongly advised to start reading well in advance of the tutorials and the lectures. Take your time. You have to read about 50 pages each week and it will take probably you 15 to 20 minutes reading just one page. Class is much more interesting and fun for all of us when students are well prepared. You bet the teaching team is well prepared.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY 1 TEAM

Coordinator, lecturer and tutorial teacher is Don Weenink (d.weenink@uva.nl). Tutorial teachers are Eelco Biersteker (e.biersteker@uva.nl), Myra Bosman (m.bosman@uva.nl), Fabio Cescon (f.cescon@uva.nl), Oksana Dorofeeva (o.dorofeeva@uva.nl), Laura Keesman (l.keesman@uva.nl), Alex Lopez (a.l.lopez@uva.nl), and Maartje van der Molen (m.a.vandermolen@uva.nl).

STUDY MATERIAL

Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, Indermohan Virk. 2012. *Classical Sociological Theory*, 3rd edition, Malden (USA)/Oxford (UK): Wiley-Blackwell. Abbreviated below as 'Classical'.

Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, Indermohan Virk. 2012. *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 3rd edition, Malden (USA)/Oxford (UK): Wiley-Blackwell. Abbreviated below as 'Contemporary'.

Plus reading material on Canvas, each week state-of-the art articles.

STUDY LOAD

The course comprises 6 ECTS, or 168 hours, which can be divided as follows:

- Lectures (26) and tutorials (12);
- Literature, about 53 pages a week, which comes down to about 18 hours a week (about 108);
- Preparing the exam (18);
- Preparing the tutorial texts questions, about 1 hour (6).

COVID-19 RELATED PRECAUTIONS

We are delighted to be able to teach in person again. However, Covid-19 is still with us, so let us be considerate:

- Follow the sanitary guidelines, see <https://www.uva.nl/en/current/coronavirus/return-to-campus/return-to-campus.html>
- Take a self-test at least twice a week, they can be ordered free of charge at <https://www.zelftestonderwijs.nl/>
- If you have Covid-19 related symptoms, do not attend class, stay at home and get yourself tested
- If you have Covid-19 related symptoms, test positive, or need to quarantine, please contact the course coordinator and the tutorial group teacher, with the study adviser (studieadviseur-soc@uva.nl) in cc. You will be able to follow the online quarantine tutorial group on Thursday, from 9-11
- Due to governmental Covid-19 related regulations, only 75 students are allowed to participate in the on site lectures. You can register for the lectures on Canvas, People, Groups. The lectures will be streamed live via Zoom and available for watching later on Canvas.

IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND A TUTORIAL MEETING OR FACE OTHER ISSUES

In case you cannot attend a tutorial group, please notify your tutorial group teacher. If issues come up that prevent you from fulfilling the requirements for this course as stipulated in the course manual, please contact the course coordinator and one of the student advisers via studieadviseur-soc@uva.nl.

PROGRAMME (TENTATIVE)

Week 1, 6 September: Long term developments in interdependencies: social differentiation and social solidarity

Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: 'On theories'; 'What's the use of studying old texts?'; 'Dealing with colonialist and gender biases'; 'Social facts'; 'Objectivity in science'; 'Interdependencies and interactions'; 'Social solidarity and social differentiation'

Literature:

Ali Megji 2021. *Decolonizing Sociology: An introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 1-24.

Wednesday, 11-13, REC-C1.03: 'Anomie and social solidarity'

Literature:

Hadi Sohrabi 2019. 'Durkheimian critique of contemporary multiculturalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(8), 1283-1304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1585898>, 21 pages.

Tutorials

Literature:

Classical, Chapter 16, Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. 220-242, 22 pages.

Key concepts:

anomie; association; collective consciousness (and crime); collective particularism; colonial episteme, colonial time and being; compounding; emergent property; concepts; definiteness; epistemology; functionalism; interdependency; law (repressive and restitutory) and social solidarity; moral individualism; objectivity, positivism; secondary collectives/groups; segmentary structure of society; social cohesion; social differentiation; social division of labour (causes of); social facts; social integration; social interaction; social justice; social solidarity (organic and mechanical); sui generis; supra-organism

Week 2, 13 September: Long term developments in interdependencies: civilising processes

Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: 'Figurations and civilising processes'

Literature:

Goudsblom & Menell 1997. *The Norbert Elias Reader* Chapter 8 'The rise of the fork', Chapter 9 'The sociogenesis of courts', Chapter 20 'The concept of figurations', Chapter 30 'Informalization and the Civilising Process'. 24 pages.

Wednesday, 11-13, REC-C1.03: 'More on (de)civilising processes'

Literature:

Abram de Swaan, 2001. 'Dyscivilization, mass extermination and the state' *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18(2-3), pp. 265-276, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632760122051733>, 11 pages.
 Cas Wouters, 2011. 'How civilizing processes continued: towards an informalization of manners and a third nature personality' *The Sociological Review*, pp. 140-160, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214561306>, 20 pages.

Tutorials

Literature:

Contemporary, Chapter 33, Norbert Elias, *The social constraint towards self-constraint*, pp. 499-509. 10 pages.

Key concepts:

centrifugal and centripetal forces; civilizing processes; compartmentalization (psychological, social and spatial); controlled decontrolling; decivilizing processes; dehumanization; dycivilising processes; figurations; first nature; functions of the code of manners (modelling; representational; regulatory); homo clausus; monopoly of violence and taxation; pacification; power balance, shame (threshold); sociogenesis; stateformation; third nature; psychogenesis; state (cf. Weber); self restraint; second nature; social constraint; super-ego

Week 3, 20 September: Social interactions: Rituals that make society

Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: 'Rituals as the key to thinking and morality'

Literature:

Anne Warfield Rawls 2001. 'Durkheim's treatment of practice. Concrete practice vs representations as the foundation of reason', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 1(1), 33-68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X0100100102>. Read until p. 54, 'Three points of comparison between Durkheim and Hume'. 21 pages.

Wednesday, 11-13, REC-C1.03: 'Collective effervescence and collective action'

Literature:

Shilling, Chris 1997. 'Emotions, embodiment and the sensation of society', *The Sociological Review* 45(2): 195-219, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00061>. 24 pages.

Tutorials

Literature:

Classical, Chapter 17, Émile Durkheim, *Elementary forms of the religious life*, pp. 243-254. 11 pages.

Key concepts:

categories of thought/understanding (and their empirical validity cf. empiricist vs. a-priorists and cf. Durkheim vs. Hume); collective effervescence; collective representations; emotional body (with somatic, behavioural, and feeling components); emotional or moral forces; features of religion (cf. Durkheim); interweaving of the social and biological in embodied emotions; homo duplex; human sensuality; practice; rituals (differentiated and imitative); sacred objects (symbols); social construction; society as religion; systematized hallucinations; transcendence

Week 4, 27 September: Social interactions: Our social selves

Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: 'What makes for meaningful social interaction: intersubjectivity'

Literature:

Thomas J. Scheff 2003. 'Shame in self and society', *Symbolic Interaction*, 26(2), 239-262,
<https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.239>. 23 pages.

Note! Wednesday 29 September, instead of lecture: 10-11 first online assessment via Canvas

Tutorials

Literature:

Classical, Chapter 25, George Herbert Mead, *The Self*, pp. 347-360. 13 pages.

Key concepts:

the Act; breaching experiments; differentiated selves; ethnomethodology; experience of being; game stage; generalized other generalized other; I & Me; indexicality; internal dialogue; intersubjectivity; life world; mutual adjustment; phenomenology; play stage; pragmatism; self as emergent property; self as social process; self as subject and object; semiotics; significant symbols; social accomplishment of the objectivity social facts; social behaviourism; symbol emancipation; symbolic interaction (three premises); system of signs

Week 5, October 4: Social interactions: Situations and social control

Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: 'Face and the dramaturgy of social life'

Literature:

Tavory, Iddo. 2018. 'Between situations: Anticipation, rhythms, and the theory of interaction', *Sociological Theory* 36(2): 117-133.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275118777007>. 16 pages

Wednesday, 11-13, REC-C1.03: 'Self and social order in public spaces'

Literature:

Elijah Anderson. 2015. 'The white space', *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(1), 10-21,
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214561306>. 11 pages

Tutorials

Literature:

Contemporary, Chapter 2, Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, pp. 46-61. 15 pages.

Key concepts:

appearance; backstage and frontstage; civil (in)attention (and social differentiation and social control); code of the street; cosmopolitan canopy; deference; demeanour; dramaturgical approach; dramatic realization; face and face-work; self as sacred object; situation; idealization; impression management; interaction ritual (cf. Goffman); looking-glass self; performance (sincere and cynical); master status; saving face; shame as master social emotion (cf. Scheff); shame spirals; sociological relevance of performances; stigma; white space

Week 6, October 11 Social interaction: Zooming in and out on social life
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Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: Micro- and macro causalities

Literature: Randall Collins (1981) 'On the microfoundations of macrosociology', *American Journal of Sociology* 86: 984-1014, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2778745>. 30 pages.

Wednesday, 11-13, REC-C1.03: The micro origins of social change

Literature: Erika Summers Effler, 2002. 'The micropotential for social change: Emotion, consciousness, and social movement formation', *Sociological Theory*, 20(1), 41-60 , <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9558.00150>. 19 pages.

Tutorials

Literature:

Contemporary, Chapter 4, Randall Collins, *Interaction ritual chains*, pp. 75-90. 15 pages.

Key concepts:

asymmetrical interdependencies; critiques of symbolic interactionism and rational actor approaches; deviant emotions; emotional energy; emotional modes of being; feeling rules; interaction rituals cf. Collins; interaction ritual chains (individuals as); interaction rituals as markets; management of emotions; market of interaction rituals (macro shifts therein); micro and macro social processes; micro and macro causal power; conditions for critical consciousness and resistance; social inequality, body and emotions

Week 7, October 18: Recap interactions and interdependencies
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Lectures

Monday, 17-20, REC-A0.01: Looking back at the course, how to prepare for the exam and other questions

Week 8, October 25: assessment

Note! Wednesday 27 October: 10-11 second online assessment via Canvas

Resit dates

Friday 17 December 9-10 online resit assessment via Canvas

Monday 20 December 12.30-13.30 online resit assessment via Canvas

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is based on two online, multiple choice exam, probably including an open essay question that must be completed within 24hours after the exam. More details follow.

CHANGES IN THE COURSE (PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO LAST YEAR'S EVALUATION)

First, instead of assignments, the assessment will take the form of a multiple choice exam predominantly; due to the large number of students grading written assignments is no longer feasible given the hours allotted to this course. Second, deliberations between the course coordinator and a group of students about decolonizing this course in particular and the sociology bachelor programme in general resulted in a memo, which has been used by the departmental program committee to further the decolonizing process of the department's teaching overall. The memo can be requested via the course coordinator. Some implications for this year's course: 1) the weekly set of questions to prepare the tutorials will include a question that challenges students to think about gender and colonialist biases in the text and their own thinking about social life; 2) in the lectures, attention will be given to how the tutorial texts are a product of a particular time and place to indicate biases and limits, despite their merits; 3) in the lectures, explicit consideration will be given to sensitive topics and feelings of awkwardness (including those of the teachers) and content warnings will be announced; 4) more generally, more attention will be given to explicating the choices made that have resulted in this particular set-up of the course.