



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET

**Department of Sociology**

**Course Syllabus**  
**Classical Sociological Theory**  
**Fall 2024**

**Teacher**  
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# **Classical Sociological Theory**

A Doctoral Course for PhD Candidates

Fall Term 2024, Credits: 7.5 ECTS

## **Course Description**

The course will examine the classical foundations of sociology. It will focus on the works of the most influential and original contributors (Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and George Simmel) who have had an enduring and decisive impact on the development of modern sociological thought and research. Strong emphasis is placed on the reading, analyzing and discussing major original texts in order to arrive at a deeper and more advanced understanding of how these early sociological pioneers developed and crafted distinct lenses through which to view social reality, its functioning and its transformation.

The course is mandatory for the research program in sociology, offered by the Department of Sociology, Uppsala University but it is open to doctoral candidates in other disciplines.

The course is given on a half-time basis during the first half of the fall term, stretching over a period of nine weeks (3/9 – 5/11). The language of instruction is English.

## **Learning outcomes**

Upon accomplishment of the course, the participants are expected to

- have sufficient knowledge about the origin of sociology and the specific social and intellectual context in which sociology was born as an academic discipline;
- have advanced understanding of the meaning of the central concepts and theories in classical sociological theory;
- show the ability to unpack analytically the classical sociological perspectives by identifying the basic tenets, tacit assumptions, key argumentation structures, and main implications of each perspective as well as the ability to discern important similarities and differences among them;
- demonstrate the ability to assess critically classical sociological theories in terms of their merits and limitations;
- have knowledge about the ways in which the classical heritage has shaped and continues to influence modern sociological debate and research.

## **The Design of the Course**

Teaching takes the form of a series of mandatory seminars. At each seminar, specific parts of relevant literature will be the subject of a detailed discussion to which all participants are expected to contribute actively. Prior to each seminar, participants are expected to read the assigned texts carefully. In order to help students prepare for the in-class discussions and to structure the treatment of the assigned literature, a few broad questions will be proposed by the teacher in advance for each seminar. Based on these questions, the participants are expected to write a short text-reflection (ca one page) to be submitted at

the seminar. Attendance and active participation in seminars are essential and absence will lead to extra written assignments. However, the students who miss more than two sessions will not be able to continue the course and will have to take it the next time it is given.

## Schedule

Date	Time	Place	Form
Tuesday 3/9	15:15-17:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Introduction
Tuesday 17/9	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 1
Tuesday 24/9	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 2
Tuesday 1/10	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 3
Tuesday 8/10	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 4
Tuesday 15/10	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 4
Tuesday 22/10	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 6
Tuesday 29/19	13:15-15:00	Engelska Parken 3-1012	Seminar 7
Tuesday 5/11	Course Paper to be handed in		

## Teaching

### Lecture 1: Introduction to Classic Sociology

#### Seminar 1: Some Early Thinkers

Literature:

Ellwood, Charles, E. (1909). The Origin of Society. *American Journal of Sociology* 15(3): 394–404.

<file:///C:/Users/rezaz527/Work%20Folders/Desktop/PHD%20Classic%20Sociology/Origin%20of%20Human%20Society.pdf>

Du Bois, W. E. B.t (1898). The Study of the Negro Problems. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11: 1–23.

Mondo Lengermann, P. and Niebrugge, G. (1998). *The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory 1830-1930*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Spencer, Herbert (1860). The Social Organism. In *The Man Versus the State: With Six Essays on Government, Society, and Freedom*.

[file:///C:/Users/rezaz527/Work%20Folders/Desktop/PHD%20Classic%20Sociology/Social%20Organism%20\(Spencer\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/rezaz527/Work%20Folders/Desktop/PHD%20Classic%20Sociology/Social%20Organism%20(Spencer).pdf)

Tönnies, Ferdinand (1887). Part One: General Statement of the Main Concepts. In *Community and Society*.

[https://books.google.se/books?hl=sv&lr=&id=sKcITieRERYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP7&dq=t%20C3%B6nnies+A+general+classification+of+key+ideas&ots=88D5a7w29w&sig=6JjWc03TF4EcE2RKR0pK6tExMBU&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=t%20C3%B6nnies%20A%20general%20classification%20of%20key%20ideas&f=false](https://books.google.se/books?hl=sv&lr=&id=sKcITieRERYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP7&dq=t%20C3%B6nnies+A+general+classification+of+key+ideas&ots=88D5a7w29w&sig=6JjWc03TF4EcE2RKR0pK6tExMBU&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=t%20C3%B6nnies%20A%20general%20classification%20of%20key%20ideas&f=false)

### **Seminars 2 and 3: Karl Marx**

Literature:

Marx, Karl (1857–61). *Grundrisse*.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/grundrisse.pdf>

Marx, Karl (1846). *The German Ideology*.

[https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx\\_The\\_German\\_Ideology.pdf](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf)

### **Seminar 4: Max Weber**

Literature:

Weber, Max (1922). Chapter 1 (Basic Sociological Terms), Chapter 3 (The Types of Legitimate Domination) and Chapter 4 (Status Groups and Classes Chapters). In *Economy and Society* Volume 1, Part 1.

Weber, Max (1905). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

### **Seminar 5: Charles Cooley, George Mead and George Simmel**

Literature:

Cooley, Charles, H. (1922). *Human Nature and the Social Order*.

[https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Cooley/Cooley\\_1902/Cooley\\_1902toc.html](https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Cooley/Cooley_1902/Cooley_1902toc.html)

Mead, George H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*.

[http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Mead/pubs2/mindself/Mead\\_1934\\_toc.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Mead/pubs2/mindself/Mead_1934_toc.html)

Simmel, George (1971). *On Individual and Social Forms*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

### **Seminars 6 and 7: Emile Durkheim**

Literature:

Durkheim, Emile (1893). *The Division of Labor in Society*.

Durkheim, Emile (1895). *The Rules of Sociological Method*.

### **Examination**

The course is examined partly through the doctoral candidates' preparation for and active participation in the seminars, partly through an individually written final paper, which must be written in English and uploaded in Studium no later than Tuesday, November 5th, 2024.

The criteria crucial to the assessment and grading the final course paper are as follows:

- The extent to which the paper engage the course literature;

- The depth of the understanding of the literature as demonstrated through the paper;
- The degree to which the paper is argumentative (rather than merely descriptive);
- The quality of the argumentations assessed by the support provided (in form of paginated references) as the analytical precision and the lucidity of the structure of the paper;
- The formal aspects of the paper (academic language, correct references list of literature, etc.).

Sincerely  
Reza Azarian