

SOCIOLOGY 500

FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Weekly Guide

SEPTEMBER TERM - 2016

(UBC: Monday 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.)
ANSO – Room 1305

Instructor: Ralph Matthews, Ph.D.

Week 1: September 13, 2016

Introduction to the Course.

This session will provide a general outline and discussion of the issues to be examined in the course, and their relevance to current sociology. The course is not a 'History' of Sociological Thought' course of the type frequently taught in Sociology programs. Rather, as the title states, it is a course about the "foundations" of sociological thought. The difference lies in the underlying purpose.

The aim of this course is not to have you 'learn' who said what. Rather, it is about 'why' they said it.

1. The focus is on the **underlying questions** that the early sociologists were grappling with in the years leading to the middle of the twentieth century.
2. The analysis is concerned with analyzing the relative **traditions of social thought** and where individual sociologists fit into those tradition. In that sense, there will be a strong analysis of the philosophical basis of sociological thought as well as the traditions and schools of thought involved in sociology as they developed through a period of about 100 years.
3. There will be a concern **with both the substantive and the epistemological concerns of sociological theorists**. That is, the course is not just about what they said about the nature of society, but also about what these theorists said about **the nature of how we achieve evidence and make explanations** with regard to the nature of society. In that sense, the course is not just a foundation in social thought, but also a course in the foundations of methods in social thought.
4. Finally, in doing all this, the course takes **a sociology of knowledge perspective to social thought**. That is, it sees social theory as a product of the society in which its creators are embedded. It asks the question: What were the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of the society around them that influenced the various sociologists who founded our disciplines as they shaped their perspectives? Moreover, it asks, how relevant are these perspective to the quite different social, economic, political and cultural conditions that exist today and on into the future?

Week 2: September 20, 2016

The Nature of Social Explanation

Readings:

Greer, Scott (1969). "The Assumptions of Social Science", pp. 19-27; "Sense Date, Frame of Reference, and Fact" pp. 28-36; "Theory, Law and Test", pp. 109-137; "Models, Theories and Guiding Metaphors" 138-149. ***The Logic of Social Inquiry***, Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Stinchcombe, Arthur (1968). "Introduction" pp. 3-13; "The Logic of Scientific Inference" pp. 15-56; ***Constructing Social Theories***. N.Y: Harcourt Brace.

Bell, Daniel (1978). "Forward 1978", pp. xi-xxix. ***The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism***. Revised paperback edition. NY: Basic Books

Sjoberg, Gideon and Roger Nett (1968). "Introduction" pp. 1-13, "Basic Orientation Toward the Scientific Method" pp. 14-38, and "The Logic of Inquiry and the Nature of Theoretical Systems", pp. 39-69. ***A Methodology for Social Research***. NY: Harper and Row.

Mills, C, Wright (1959). "The Promise", pp. 3-24, ***The Sociological Imagination***. NY: Oxford University Press.

Week 3: September 27, 2016

The Rise of Sociology in Conceptual Context – The Positivist Tradition and Sociological Thought

Readings:

Benton, Ted (1972). "August Comte and Positivist Sociology" Pp, 18-46, "Positivism and Ideology in the Work of Emile Durkheim", pp. 81-99. ***Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies***. London, UK: Routledge

Kolakowski, Lesak (1968). "An Over-all View of Positivism" pp. 1-10; "Positivism down to David Hume" pp. 11-46.; "Positivism Triumphant", pp. 71-99. ***The Alienation of Reason***. NY: Doubleday.

Durkheim, Emile (1938). "What is a Social Fact?", pp. 1-13; "Rules for the Observation of Social Facts", pp. 14-46 "; "Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts", pp. 89-124, ***The Rules of Sociological Method***. NY: Free Press.

Mills, C, Wright (1959). "Abstracted Empiricism", pp. 50-75, ***The Sociological Imagination***. NY: Oxford University Press.

Week 4: October 04, 2016

The Rise of Sociology in Conceptual Context: The Historicist Tradition and Sociological Thought

Readings:

Benton, Ted (1972). "Kant and the Neo-Kantians". Pp, 100-110, **Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies**. London, UK: Routledge

Martindale, Don (1960). "The Philosophical Foundations of Sociological Formalism" pp. 211-232. **The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory**. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Rickert, Heinrich (reprinted 1962). "The Principal (sic.) Lines of Demarcation", pp. 10-17", "Concept and Reality" pp. 30-39", "The Method of the Natural Sciences" pp. 40-52). **Science and History: A Critique of Positivist Epistemology**.

Dilthey, Wilhelm (reprinted 1961). "The Methods of History", pp. 64-82", **Meaning in History: W. Dilthey's Thoughts on History and Society**. Edited and Introduced by H. P. Rickman. London, UK: George, Allan and Unwin.

Collingwood, R. G. (1946). "The A-Priori Impossibility of a Science of Man", pp. 7-25 in I. Krimmerman (ed.), **The Nature and Scope of Social Science: A Critical Anthology**. N. Y. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Reprinted from Collingwood, **The Idea of History**, pp. 7-25, NY: Oxford U. Press.

Week 5: October 11, 2016

The Epistemological Bridges: Simmel and Weber – Neo-Kantianism and Ideal Types

Readings:

Benton, Ted (1972). "The Methodology of Max Weber". Pp, 112-136, **Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies**. London, UK: Routledge

Martindale, Don (1960). "The Social Action Branch of Social Behaviourism", pp. 376-393, **The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory**. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Weber, Max (1947). "The Fundamental Concepts of Sociology", pp. 87-132, **The Theory of Social and Economic Organization**. NY: Free Press.

Weber, Max (1949). "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy", pp. 49-112, **The Methodology of the Social Sciences**. NY: Free Press.

Martindale, Don (1960). "Georg Simmel" pp. 236-247, **The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory**. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Simmel, Georg (1963). "How is Society Possible?" pp. 72-93 in Maurice Natanson (ed.), **Philosophy of the Social Sciences: A Reader**. NY: Random House.

Simmel, Georg (1950). "The Field of Sociology" (pp. 3-25), "The Social and the Individual Level (An Example of General Sociology)" pp. 26-39; "Sociability (An Example of Pure, or Formal, Sociology)" pp. 40-57, **The Sociology of Georg Simmel**, Translated, edited and with an introduction by Kurt H. Wolff. N.Y: Free Press.

Week 6: October 18, 2016

Phenomenology and the Rise of Interpretive Idealist Sociology:

Readings:

Schutz, Alfred (1971). "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences", pp. 48-94. **Collected Papers, Volume I: The Problem of Social Reality**. Den Hague: NL: Martinus Nijhoff.: Also reprinted in Maurice Natanson (ed.) (1963), **Philosophy and the Social Sciences: A Reader**. Pp. 302-346.

Schutz, Alfred (1971). "Common Sense and Scientific Interpretation", pp. 3-47, **Collected Papers, Volume I: The Problem of Social Reality**. Den Hague: NL: Martinus Nijhoff.: Also reprinted in Maurice Natanson (ed.) (1963), **Philosophy and the Social Sciences: A Reader**. Pp. 302-346.

Schutz, Alfred (1964). "The Stranger: an Essay in Social Psychology" pp. 91-105; "The Homecomer", pp. 106-119, **Collected Papers, Volume II: Studies in Social Theory**. Den Hague: NL: Martinus Nijhoff.:

Week 7: October 25, 2016

Idealism and Ideographic Perspectives Triumphant: Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism

Readings:

Kolakowski, Lesak (1968). "Pragmatism and Positivism" pp. 154-17. **The Alienation of Reason**. NY: Doubleday.

Mead, George Herbert (1934; 1979). "The Self", p. 135-200 in **Mind, Self and Society**. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.

Mills, C. Wright (1940). "Situated Actions and the Vocabularies of Motives", **American Sociological Review**, 5: 904-913. Reprinted in C. Wright Mills (1963). **Power, Politics and People**. (1963), pp. 439-452. NY: Ballantine.

Blumer, Herbert (1969). "The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism", pp. 1-60 in **Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method**. NJ: Prentice Hall.

Denzin, Norman K. (1992): "Enter Cultural Studies" Chapter 4, pp. 71-94 in **Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies: The Politics of Interpretation**. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Week 8: November 01, 2016

The Assumptions of Dialecticism and Praxis as a Method of Social Explanation: From Fuerback, through Hegel to Marx

Readings:

Boguslaw, Robert and George Vickers (1977). "Dialectical Theories and Methods", pp. 179-197 in **Prologue to Sociology**. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing.

Benton, Ted (1972). "Karl Mark and Frederick Engels: Philosophy of history and theory of knowledge". Pp. 138-169, ***Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies***. London, UK: Routledge

Lefebvre, Henri (1940; 1968). "Forward to the Fifth Edition", pp. 13-20, "The Dialectical Contradiction", pp. 21-113, ***Dialectical Materialism***. Presses Universitaires de France and Jonathan Cape Ltd.

Wardell, Mark L. and J. Kenneth Benson (1978). ***A Dialectical View: Foundation for an Alternative Sociological Method***. Pp. 232-247. Available via Google Books.

Week 9: November 08, 2016

Ideology and Its Discontents: Culture, Values and Theories of Causation and Explanation

Readings:

Durkheim, Emile (1951). "How to determine Social Causes and Social Types", pp. 145-149. ***Suicide***. NY: Free Press

Stinchcombe, Arthur (1968). "Complex Causal Structures: Demographic, Functional and Historicist Explanations of Social Phenomenon. pp. 57-129 in ***Constructing Social Theories***. N.Y: Harcourt Brace

Greer, Scott (1969). "The Symbolic Environment and Phenomenology" pp. 48-60. ***The Logic of Social Inquiry***, Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Nettler, Gwynn (1970). "The Comfort of Causes" pp. 143-171, ***Explanations***. NY: McGraw-Hill.

DiMaggio, Paul (1997). "Culture and Cognition", ***Annual Review of Sociology***, Vol. 23, 1997, pp. 263-287.

Mohr, J. W. and A. Ghaziani (2014). "Problems and Prospects of Measurement in the Study of Culture", ***Theory and Society***. Pp. 225-246.

Week 10: November 15, 2016

You Are Out of My Mind: Problematizing the "Social Brain"

Readings:

Mead, George Herbert (1934/1959). "The Biologic Individual", pp. 347-353, ***Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist***. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Pinker, Steven (2002). "The Blank Slate, The Noble Savage, and the Ghost in the Machine", pp. 1-102 in ***The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Nature***. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Franks, D. D. (2010). "Introduction", pp. 1-20 in ***Neurosociology: The Nexus Between Neuroscience and Social Psychology***". N.Y.: Springer.

Rose, Nikolas and Joelle M. Abi-Rached (2013). "Introduction" pp. 1-24; "The Social Brain", pp. 141-163; "Conclusion: Managing Brains, Minds and Selves", pp. 225-236; in **Neuro: The New Brain Sciences and the Management of the Mind**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Matthews, Ralph (2017). "Reimagining the Sociological Imagination: Including the Brain, Environment and Culture in our Understanding of Mind, Self and Society", forthcoming in P. Albenese and L. Tepperman (Eds.), **Reading Sociology**. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press. (In Press).

Week 11: November 22, 2016

The "Social Brian" as Cognition and Culture

Schutt, Russell K. Larry J. Seidman and Matcheri S. Keshavan (2015). Changing Perspectives in Three Disciplines, pp. 1-28 in Russell K. Schutt, Larry J. Seidman and Matcheri S. Keshavan (eds.), **Social Neuroscience: Brain Mind and Society**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Schutt, R. K. (2015). "The Social Brain in a Social World" pp. 231-246, in Russell K. Schutt, Larry J. Seidman and Matcheri S. Keshavan (eds.), **Social Neuroscience: Brain Mind and Society**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Von Scheve, Christian (2015). "Sociology off Neuroscience or Neurosociology", Vol. 13, pp. 255-278 in **Sociological Reflections in the Neurosciences: Advances in Medical Sociology**.

Pickersgill, M. (2011). "Introduction: Neuroscience, Identity and Society", **Advances in Medical Sociology**, 13: 255-278

Pickersgill, M. (2013). "The Social Life of the Brain: Neuroscience in Society", **Current Sociology**, 6 (3) 322-340.

Chiao, J. Y. (2009). "Cultural neuroscience: A once and future discipline", Vol. 178, pp. 287-303 in **Progress in Brain Research**.

Cerulo, K. A. (2010). "Mining the Intersections of Cognitive Sociology and Neuroscience", **Poetics** 38: 115-132.

TenHouten, W. (1997). "Neurosociology", **Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems**, 20(1) 7- 37.

Tesluk, Jordan, Judy Illes, and Ralph. Matthews (2016). First Nations and Environmental Neuroethics: Perspectives on Brain Health in a World of Change, in J. Illes (ed.) and S. Hossain (Assoc. Ed.) **Neuroethics: Defining the Issues in Theory, Practice and Policy**, Second Edition, NY: Oxford University Press. (In Press)

Week 12: November 29, 2016

Reintroducing Culture – Institutional Analysis and Field Theory

Readings:

Lock, M. and V-K Nguyen (2010). "Introduction", pp. 1-14 in *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Young, O. R. (2008). "Institutions and Environmental Change", pp. 3-46 in O. R. Young, L. A. King and H. Schroder, *Institutions and Environmental Change*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Fligstein, N. and D. McAdam (2012). "The Gist of It", pp. 3-33; "Toward a Theory of Strategic Action Fields", pp. 200-221, in *A Theory of Fields*. N.Y.: Oxford University Press

Matthews, Ralph (2014). "Committing Canadian Sociology: Developing a Canadian Sociology and a Sociology of Canada". *Canadian Review of Sociology*. 51 (2) 107-127.

Matthews, Ralph (2014). "Committing More Sociology: Responses to the Commentary on Committing Canadian Sociology". *Canadian Review of Sociology*. 51(4). Forthcoming).