

# Sociology 100: Classical Sociological Theory

Winter 2012, University of California, San Diego

M/W/F, 11:00a-11:50a; Solis Lecture Hall 104,

Prof. Tom Medvetz

Office hours: Mon & Fri, 12:05p-1:05p, and by appointment

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology emerged during the nineteenth century as part of an attempt to understand the nature, organization, and functioning of modern industrial capitalism. This class will focus on the works of three classical thinkers who were especially important in shaping the sociological tradition: Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber. We will compare and contrast these theorists extensively, focusing not only on their empirical concerns but also on their broader perspectives on the question: What is social theory? To do this, we need a unifying theme for the class. The *division of labor* will provide this theme because it was a central concern for each theorist.

This is a required class for all sociology majors, but it is open to students of other majors. You are expected to keep up with all of the assigned readings and to bring the relevant text(s) with you to each lecture. I will lecture with the assumption that you've done the reading in advance. Please note that much of the material for this class is difficult. What many of the reading assignments lack in length, they more than make up for in depth and density! In all likelihood, you will have to do most of the readings multiple times if you are to grasp them at an appropriate level. I am not kidding.

Please come to class with questions and comments.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There are four required texts for this class:

Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (W. W. Norton & Company; 2nd revised ed.)

Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Free Press)

Émile Durkheim, *Suicide* (Free Press)

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (trans. Talcott Parsons)

The texts are available for purchase at the UCSD bookstore. You may get them elsewhere, of course, but be sure to buy only versions with the same page numbers as the ones I've ordered. Additional readings will be made available through TED (<http://ted.ucsd.edu/>).

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your final grade for this class will have five parts: section participation; two medium-length writing assignments (the first due in Week 5, the second in Week 8), and a comprehensive

final examination. The components of the section participation grade will be left to the discretion of your teaching assistant. The TAs may, if they choose, give separate section assignments. The final exam will cover all of the class readings and lectures. Here is a breakdown of the grading scheme:

20%	Writing assignment #1
30%	Writing assignment #2
15%	Lecture attendance & participation
15%	Section grade (determined by TA)
20%	Final exam
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100%	Total grade

## **OTHER POLICIES**

### *Academic integrity*

You must not misrepresent your work in any way or take part in another student's failure to maintain academic integrity. I will refer any suspected cases of cheating, including plagiarism, to the Academic Integrity Office. For the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, see <http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>. The minimum penalty for violations of academic integrity will be an F grade for the course.

### *Classroom conduct*

Please refrain from being disruptive to your fellow students, and to your instructor. Disruptive behavior includes coming to class late, leaving early, text messaging, and not silencing your cell phone before class.

### *Writing*

The ability to write clearly is very important, and not something that can be reliably distinguished from "good ideas" expressed poorly. In your papers, please pay special attention to grammar, mechanics, syntax, style, and organization. In the past, students have asked me for references on writing advice, and I often point them to these two: the classic *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White and *The St. Martin's Handbook* (St. Martin's Press, 6<sup>th</sup> edition).

### *Grievances*

If you wish to contest a grade, you must first go to your TA and submit to him/her a one-page statement explaining why you think the grading is unfair. Only if you are still dissatisfied should you come to me. Please note that I will not change any grade without first discussing it with your TA. Also bear in mind that your grade may move upwards or downwards should I decide to re-grade the paper.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Part I: Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels On the workings of industrial society

<b>WEEK 1</b>	Mon Jan 9	NO READING
	Wed Jan 11	Smith, <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> , p. 8-25, p. 635-640 [TED]
	Fri Jan 13	Marx, <i>Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association</i> , p. 512-519 Marx, <i>Speech at the Anniversary of the People's Paper</i> , p. 577-578 Engels, <i>Working-Class Manchester</i> , p. 579-585 Engels, <i>Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx</i> , p. 681-682
<b>WEEK 2</b>	Mon Jan 16	NO CLASS: MLK HOLIDAY
	Wed Jan 18	Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i> , p. 146, p. 155-175 Engels, <i>The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State</i> , p. 738-740
	Fri Jan 20	Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i> , p. 176-188 Marx, <i>Capital, Vol. III</i> , p. 439-442
<b>WEEK 3</b>	Mon Jan 23	Marx, <i>Wage Labour and Capital</i> , p. 203-217 Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i> , p. 189-200
	Wed Jan 25	Engels, <i>Socialism: Utopian and Scientific</i> , p 700-724
	Fri Jan 27	Marx and Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> , p. 469-483 Marx, <i>Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i> , p. 3-6
	Mon Jan 30	Engels, <i>The Tactics of Social Democracy</i> , p. 556-573
<b>WEEK 4</b>		Part II: Émile Durkheim Solidarity and moral order
	Wed Feb 1	Durkheim, <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i> , p xxv-xxx, 1-8, 11-30
	Fri Feb 3	Durkheim, <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i> , p. 31-67
<b>WEEK 5</b>	Mon Feb 6	Durkheim, <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i> , p. 68-72, 77-87, 118-123
	Wed Feb 8	Durkheim, <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i> , p. 149-175, p. 200-225
	Fri Feb 10	Durkheim, <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i> , p. 291-341
<b>WEEK 6</b>	Mon Feb 13	Durkheim, <i>Suicide</i> , p. 41-53, p. 145-180
	Wed Feb 15	Durkheim, <i>Suicide</i> , p. 208-228, p. 239-276
	Fri Feb 17	Durkheim, <i>Suicide</i> , p. 297-325 Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature & its Social Conditions," p. 1-7 [TED]

Part III: Max Weber

The iron cage of rationality

WEEK 7	Mon Feb 20	NO CLASS: PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY
	Wed Feb 22	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic &amp; the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , p. 13-34 [356-372]
	Fri Feb 24	NO READING; FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE
WEEK 8	Mon Feb 27	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic &amp; the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , p. 35-78 [1-28]
	Wed Feb 29	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic &amp; the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , p. 79-98 [28-36]
	Fri Mar 2	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic &amp; the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , p. 98-128 [67-87]
WEEK 9	Mon Mar 5	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic &amp; the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , p. 155-183 [105-122]
	Wed Mar 7	Weber, "Bureaucracy and Legitimate Authority," p. 17-23 [TED]
	Fri Mar 9	Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," p. 323-359 (first half) [TED]
WEEK 10	Mon Mar 12	Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," p. 323-359 (second half) [TED]
	Wed Mar 14	Weber, "Science as a Vocation," p. 1-36 [TED]
	Fri Mar 16	NO READING; SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

## SOME PRACTICAL TIPS ON HOW TO READ SOCIOLOGY

By *Loïc Wacquant*

Reading sociology is not like reading the newspapers or reading a novel. If you care to get the most out of the materials you are assigned, you have to learn to read sociologically or analytically, that is, to break down an argument into its constituent parts (explanandum, explanans, premises, hypotheses, theorems, laws or mechanisms, evidence, conclusions and corollaries), retrace its major stages and turns, evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, and validity, and grasp, separate out, and assess its implications (empirical, conceptual, theoretical, moral or practical). Here are some practical tips to help you do just that.

**-ALWAYS READ WITH A PURPOSE:** moving your eyes across printed text is not reading! Reading with a purpose means asking a question (or, better yet, a system of questions) that you keep in mind as you progress and that helps you put the pieces of the puzzle together. So always identify from the outset what the author intends to do in the writing, what question s/he intends to answer, how s/he proposes to do it, and what kind of arguments s/he develops (causal, historical, hermeneutic, etc.).

**-SCAN AND SCOPE THE TEXT BEFOREHAND:** you'll do a much better job picking up the argument(s) in the text if you know in advance what to look for. For this, always scan the full text beforehand: flip through the pages, grab a few paragraphs here and there, pay attention to titles and subtitles, notice phrases in bold or italics, tables and figures (in particular their captions)—in short get a rough feel for what's going on there. You can also read the first and last sentence or paragraph of every section, just to become familiar with the substance and tone of the argument(s). Then read the text in depth.

**-READ IN (SOCIO)LOGICAL MANNER:** this means identifying the problem the author is trying to resolve, the concepts s/he uses or develops for that purpose, the evidence s/he brings to bear on the issue, and the social mechanisms invoked. Reflect on the limitations, biases, gaps, and silences of both question and answer. Make an effort to resituate them in the broader constellation of sociological theories and research you are familiar with; never read a text in isolation: always relate it to other cognate texts you know (among them, those assigned for the same and prior weeks). Sociological arguments have a structure; your reading should locate and mimic it.

**-READ DIFFERENTIALLY:** do not treat all printed text in the same manner; "democratic reading" is analytically inefficient (even unsound); some parts of a text contain critical conceptual distinctions or causal arguments and should be read very cautiously (and repeatedly if necessary); others contain illustrative materials, empirical elaborations, or theoretical digressions and can be read more rapidly (and even sometimes skimmed or skipped). So allocate your time and effort wisely, in proportion to the difficulty and/or significance of the passage.

**-ANNOTATE THE TEXT AS YOU READ:** read with a pen or pencil in hand and mark the progression, twists, and turns of the argument as it unfolds. You can devise your own stenographic system (arrows, stars, circlings, underlinings, etc.) to highlight in a consistent and economical manner the main names and dates, key authors and references, definitions and logical turning points, salient illustrations, conclusions and implications, etc. But do not defeat your purpose and highlight everything!

**-WRITE UP NOTES IMMEDIATELY AFTER READING:** if you've read a text with an

active analytical intention, you should be able to summarize and reconstruct the main lines of its argument(s). Immediately upon finishing your reading, write, type, or scribble a short recapitulation of what you just absorbed in telegraphic or diagrammatic form. What was the key question posed by the author, what answers were given to it, what concepts or theories were introduced, what evidence adduced, how does this or that thesis or theory differ from rival views, etc. Use your annotations and marginalia as guides and signposts; if the text introduces new concepts, make a note of them and write down their definition (as given by the author and/or as reconstructed by you); if it contrasts several phenomena or theories, enumerate what makes them different or similar. Use whatever devices (tables, lists, bullets, diagrams, etc.) give you the best synoptic and synthetic view of the piece you've read. Your reading notes will be invaluable self-teaching and learning aids for as long as you study sociology (and beyond).

**-REFLECT BACK UPON THE TEXT AND EVALUATE THE ARGUMENT:** never close a book or article without evaluating its argument: was it logically consistent and empirically adequate, plausible or convincing and why (not)? What alternative or rival arguments come to mind? Again, relate the text you've read to others you know (or mentioned by the author). Never take an author at face value, no matter how famous and authoritative; there is a lot of bulls—in social science writings, as in every other kind. It's your job to separate sociological wheat from chaff. Also, do not be swayed by emotional appeals and moral exhortation: more often than not, good sentiments hide bad sociology. Forsake the "logic of the trial": the validity of a sociological demonstration has nothing to do with how attractive or repulsive it is ethically or politically.

**-DO NOT HESITATE TO READ A TEXT A SECOND, THIRD,... NTH TIME:** a common myth among bad readers is that if you've read well a given text, you're done for life. This makes no sense! A text may be "discovered" as many times as there are purposes for reading it. Genuinely complex and rich texts are profitably read several times over as each reading unearths new layers, puzzles, and treasures. (Later you might come to own multiple copies of the important books you've read).

Remember the etymology of the verb to read: it comes from the Middle English, *ræden*, to advise. So heed this advice and be advised when you read.