

# SO128-15 History of Sociological Thought

**26/27**

**Department**

Sociology

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 1

**Module leader**

Teodora Todorova

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This core module introduces you to some of the main themes in classical sociology. It's a huge subject. One way of approaching it is to see the emergence of sociology as a response to three revolutions: the intellectual revolution of the 17th and 18th centuries ('The Enlightenment'), the industrial revolution that it helped to foster, and the French and Haitian Revolutions of the late 18th Century which sent shock waves through Europe. The intellectual revolution led people to ask whether it was possible to do a science of history and society as well as a science of nature; the industrial and political revolutions led people to say that some such science was necessary, because the forces they unleashed – new ideas about politics (e.g. human rights, democracy, equality) new forms of organization (especially emerging nation-states), new types of social groups and new types of relationships between people (e.g. class, colonial) – were deeply disruptive of the old European order. Just as science can be driven both by pure curiosity and by the desire to harness nature's energies for human purposes, so sociology has its 'pure' scholars, its partisans and its reformists. The four writers – three European and one African American – we will look at all combined these multiple qualities. They all offered both techniques of thinking that continue to have major influence. Their foundational concerns with questions of capitalism and modernity, class and social hierarchies, nationalism and racism, alongside their general attempt to grapple with the question of how societies change remain central to the sociological approach.

These four thinkers were all also public figures, concerned with the political, economic and cultural problems of their day. This dedication to studying and commenting on society in an active and involved way remains an aspiration central to many sociologists' enduring interest in the subject.

[Module web page](#)

## Module aims

To give students beginning their degree a broad overview of the roots of sociology, both historical and intellectual, and of some of its most influential approaches

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

This module will look at the emergence of sociology in the 19th and early 20th centuries, both as a scholarly discipline and as an intellectual sensibility. It will address, thus, the versions of social science that some of the discipline's founders believed they were helping to create, the economic, cultural and political changes that they were living through, and the social and intellectual milieu in which they came to maturity. In order to do this we will touch on both their programmatic statements about how scholarly inquiry should be carried out and their efforts to grapple with a particular substantive problems as regards modernity. We will also suggest ways in which their efforts have either stood the test of time or been rendered obsolete. An outline:

Introduction: the birth of modernity and sociological theory  
Debating Marx and Weberian approaches to class inequality  
Durkheim on solidarity Marx on capitalism and alienation  
Durkheim on suicide and individualism  
Marx on class struggle and capitalism  
Marx on alienation and human freedom  
Weber on culture, capitalism and the Protestant work ethic  
Du Bois on racialisation and freedom

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- An understanding of some of the distinctive features of sociology as a discipline and the approaches to social theory associated with it.
- An awareness of major classical sociological perspectives and traditions, and the social and historical contexts in which they emerged.
- An acquaintance with at least some of the classical sociological texts and the debates to which they have given rise.

## Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

## International

Attends to thinkers and perspectives that offer a expansive sense of modernity - in Europe but also the wider world (particularly through capitalist and/or colonial relations).

## Subject specific skills

Social theory canon - understanding of the foundations of the discipline and social sciences in general

## Transferable skills

close engagement of original theoretical text- demonstrating ability to navigate difficult data written fluency - demonstrating ability to convert complex original material into accessible and fluent essay answers

verbal communication - seminar discussion/debate which rewards ability to verbally convey understanding of complex theoretical material

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

must read core texts each work as well as come to each weekly seminar with written notes in reference to the set questions provided by convenor for each original text.

writing two essays - one formative and one summative.

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

## Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
<b>Assessment component</b>			
2000 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)
Answer one question (all module weeks/topics will have a corresponding essay question that the student may chose).			
<b>Reassessment component is the same</b>			

## Feedback on assessment

Written feedback and verbal feedback if requested via convenors/seminar leaders' office hours.

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
- Year 1 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology
- Year 1 of UIPA-L3L8 Undergraduate Sociology and Global Sustainable Development

This module is Core optional for:

- UPDA-LM49 Undergraduate Health and Social Policy
  - Year 1 of LM49 Health and Social Policy
  - Year 5 of LM49 Health and Social Policy
  - Year 6 of LM49 Health and Social Policy
  - Year 7 of LM49 Health and Social Policy
  - Year 8 of LM49 Health and Social Policy
  - Year 9 of LM49 Health and Social Policy
- Year 1 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 1 of ULAA-M135 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
- Year 1 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 1 of ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)

This module is Option list G for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics